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ARMINELL

A Social Romance

BY THE

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ARMINELL,

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE TURN OF THE TIDE.

GILES SALTREN caught an express and whirled down into the west. He had not taken a ticket for Orleigh Road Station, as he did not choose to get out there, but at the nearest town, and there he hired a light trap in which he was driven to within half a mile of Chillacot, where he dismissed the vehicle and walked on.

He had resolved what to do. He would pay a hasty visit to his mother and then go on to the village, and perhaps call at the Rectory. He must show himself as much as possible.

He had hardly left the trap, when, on turning a corner, he came on Samuel Ceely and

Joan Melhuish walking together, arm in arm. The sight brought the blood into his pale face. He was behind the pair, and he was able to notice the shabbiness of the old man and the ungainliness of his walk. This man was his father. To him, the meanest in the parish—not to his lordship, the highest—must he look as the author of his being.

Joan Melhuish knew nothing of Samuel's love affair with Marianne Welsh. She looked up to and admired the cripple, seeing him in the light of her girlish fancy, as the handsome, reckless gamekeeper.

Giles's foot lagged, but he kept his eyes steadily on the man slouching along before him. A new duty had fallen on him. He must provide for the cripple, without allowing the secret of his relationship to become known, both for the sake of his mother and for that of the trusting Joan.

Samuel Ceely heard his step and turned his head, disengaged his arm from the woman, and extended the mutilated hand towards the young man.

“ I say—I say ! ” began he, with his water-

blue eyes fixed eagerly on Jingles. "I was promised a place ; Miss Arminell herself said I should have work, two shillings a day, sweeping, and now they say she has gone away and left no directions about me. If you can put in a word with my lady, or with my lord, mind that I was promised it."

"How can you, Samuel, speak of my lord, when you know he is dead?"

"My lord is not dead," answered the old man sharply. "Master Giles is now my lord. I know what I am about."

"And Samuel would do the work wonderfully well," threw in Joan ; "of all the beautiful things that ever I see, is Samuel's sweeping. If they were to give prizes for that as they do for ploughing, Samuel would be rich."

"I should like," said Giles, "to have some particulars about my lord's death."

"'Tis a terrible job, sure enough," answered the woman. "And folks tell strange tales about it, not half of 'em is true. They've sat on him this afternoon."

"The inquest already?"

“Yes, to be sure. You see he died o’ Saturday, so he was crowned to-day. Couldn’t do it yesterday.”

“And what was the verdict? I have been to Huxham to-day”—this was the nearest town.

“Samuel can tell you better than I, sir, I don’t understand these things. But it do seem a funny thing to crown a man when he is dead.”

“What was the verdict?” asked Giles of Samuel.

“Well,” said the old man, shaking his head. “It puzzled the jury a bit. Some said it was an accident, and some that it was murder; but the worst of it all is, that it will drive my sweeping at two shillings out of the heads of my lady and Miss Arminell. They’ll be so took up wi’ ordering of mourning that they’ll not think of me—which is a crying shame. If his lordship could but have lived another week till I was settled into my sweeping and victuals, he might have died and welcome, but to go interfering like between me and two shillings, is that provok-

ing I could swear. Not that I say it was his lordship's fault, and I lay no blame on him, but folks do say, that——”

“There now, Samuel,” interrupted Joan. “This is young Mr. Saltren you are speaking to and you are forgetting.”

“I’m not forgetting,” grumbled the old man ; “don’t you be always of a flurrying me. Why, if I had had my situation as was promised me, we might have married and reared a family. I reckon one can do that on two shillings a day, and broken victuals from the kitchen. I might take the case into court and sue Captain Saltren for damages.”

“Hush Samuel,” interposed Joan nervously, looking at Giles.

“I aint a-going to be hushed like a baby,” said Samuel Ceely irritably ; “I reckon if I don’t get my place, we can’t marry, and have a family, and where will my domestic happiness be? I tell you, them as chucked his lordship down the Cleave, chucked my family as was to be down with him, and if I can’t bring ’em into court for murdering his lordship, I can for murdering my family, of as

healthy and red-cheeked children as might have been—all gone,” said the old man grimly. “All, head over heels down the Cleave, along of Lord Lamerton.”

“How can you talk so?” said Joan, reproachfully. “You know you have no children.”

“I might have had—a dozen of ’em—seven girls and five boys, and I’d got the names for them all in my head. I might have had if I’d got the sweeping and the broken victuals as I was promised. What’s the difference in wickedness, I’d like to know?” asked the old man sententiously, and figuring out his proposition on Saltren’s coat with his crooked fingers. “What’s the odds in wickedness, chucking over a horrible precipice a dozen sweet and innocent children as is, or as is to be, my family was as certain as new potatoes in June, and now all gone, chucked down the Cleave. It is wickedness.”

“What is that you hinted about Captain Saltren?” asked Giles gravely.

“Oh, I say nothing,” answered old Samuel

sourly. "I don't talk—I leave that to the woman."

"It does seem a pity," said Joan. "Samuel would have been so useful. He might have gone about the park picking up the sandwich-papers and the corks and bottles, after the public."

"But," said the young man, "I really wish to know what the talk is about in which my father's name is introduced."

"Sir, sir! folk's tongues go like the clappers in the fields to drive away the blackbirds. A very little wind makes 'em rattle wonderfully."

"But what have they said?"

"Well"—Joan hesitated. She was a woman of delicate feeling. "Well, sir, you must not think there is anything in it. Tongues cannot rest, and what they say to-day they unsay to-morrow. Some think that as the captain was so bitter against his lordship, and denounced him as ordained to destruction, that he may have had a helping hand in his death. But, sir, the captain did not speak so strong as Mr. Welsh, and nobody says that Mr. Welsh laid a finger on

him. Why should they try to fix it on your father and not on your uncle? But, sir, there is no call to fix it on any one. I might walk over the edge of the Cleave. If a man goes over the brink, I reckon he needs no help to make him go to the bottom."

"The jury couldn't agree, Joan," said Samuel. "Two of 'em wanted to bring in wilful murder against the captain."

"So they did against his lordship in the case of Arkie Tubb. But that was nonsense. His lordship wasn't there. And this is nonsense, just the same."

"But the captain was nigh. Mr. Maccluff saw him."

"Well, and he might have seen me, and he did see me a little while afore, as I was coming from Court with some baccy money for you, Samuel. That don't follow that I killed his lordship. Mr. Maccluff see'd also Farmer Yole's old grey mare. Be you a going accusing of that old mare of having had a hoof in his lordship's death?"

"Where did Mr. Maccluff see my father?" asked the young man.

“On the down. But he didn’t see him speak to his lordship, and he couldn’t tell to half an hour or three-quarters when it was. So the crowner discharged the jury, just as he did in the case of Arkie, and he got together another, and they found that his lordship had done it accidental.”

“For all that,” growled Samuel, “folks will always say that the captain helped him over, as he was so set against him.”

“Then,” said Joan, “it is a shame and a sin if they do. It is one thing to talk against a person, and another thing to lift a hand against him. I’ve said hard things of you, scores of times ; I’ve said you never ought to have taken the game and sent it off by the mail-cart when you was keeper, and that you couldn’t have blown off your hand if you’d not gone poaching, nor put out your hip if you’d been sober—I’ve said them cruel things scores o’ times, but never laid a finger on you to hurt you. I couldn’t do it—as you know very well.”

She cast an affectionate glance at the cripple ; then she went on, “Lord ! I forgive

and excuse all the frolics of your youth ; and folks always says things rougher than they mean them."

Instead of going on to Chillacot, as he had at first intended, Giles now resolved on following the road to the village, and returning home later. He must lose no time in showing himself. He trusted that in the excitement caused by the death of Lord Lamerton no questions would be raised about Arminell, and any little suspicions which might have been awakened by her sudden departure would be allayed.

He was not altogether easy about his father, nor satisfied with Joan's justification of him. That the jury had returned a verdict of accidental death was a relief to his mind, but it made him uncomfortable to think that suspicion against his father should be entertained. Giles had little or no knowledge of his father's new craze. He knew that the captain was a fanatic who went heart and soul with whatever commended itself to his reason or prejudice. At one time he took up hotly the subject of vegetarianism, then he became

infatuated with Anglo-Israelism, then he believed vehemently in a quack syrup he saw advertised in a Christian paper, warranted to cure all disorder; after that he became possessed with the teetotal mania, and attributed all the evils in the world, war, plagues, earthquakes, popery, and foot-and-mouth disease to the use of alcohol. Recently he had combined his religious vagaries with political theories, and had made a strange stir-about of both. His trouble at losing his situation as captain of the manganese mine, and his irritation against the railway company for wanting Chillacot had combined to work him into a condition of unusual excitability. Giles had heard that his father had seen a vision, but of what sort he had not inquired, because he was entirely out of sympathy with the spiritual exaltations and fancies of his father.

The village of Orleigh was not what is commonly termed a "church town," that is to say, it was not clustered about the church, which stood in the park, near the mansion of the Ingletts. In ancient days, when the population was sparse, the priest drew his

largest congregation from the manor house, and therein he lived as chaplain and tutor ; consequently in many places we find the parish church situated close to the manor house, and away from the village which had grown up later. It was so at Orleigh. The village consisted of a green, with an old tree in the midst, an ale-house, the Lamerton Arms, a combined general and grocery store, which was also post office, a blacksmith's forge, and half-a-dozen picturesque cottages white-washed, with red windows and thatched roofs. Most of these houses had flower gardens before their doors, encouraged thereto by an annual Floricultural Society which gave prizes to those villagers who had the neatest, most cheerful and varied gardens.

Jingles found knots of men standing about the green, some were coming out of, others about to enter the public-house door ; another knot clustered about the forge. Women were not wanting, to throw in words.

The dusk of evening had settled in, so that at first none noticed the approach of the young man. He came, not by the road, but

across by the blacksmith's garden, where a short cut saved a round. Thus he was in the midst of the men before they were aware that he was near.

He could not catch all that was being said, but he heard that the death of Lord Lamer-ton occupied their minds and exercised their tongues. His father's name was also freely bandied about.

"I say," exclaimed the village tailor, in a voice like that of a corncrake, "I say that Cap'n Saltren did it. What do you consider the reason why the coroner discharged the jury and called another? I know, if you do not. You don't perhaps happen to know, but I do, that Marianne Saltren's aunt, old Betsy Welsh, washes for the coroner. Nothing more likely, were he to allow a verdict against the captain, than that his shirt-fronts would come home iron-moulded. Don't tell me there was no evidence. Evidence is always to be had if looked for. Evidence is like snail's horns, thrust forth or drawn in, according to circumstances. If the coroner had wanted evidence, he could have had it. But

he was thinking of his shirt-front, and he, maybe, going out to a dinner-party. It is easy done, boil an old nail along with the clothes, and pounds' worth of linen is spoiled. I don't blame him," concluded the tailor sententiously. "Human nature is human nature."

"And," shouted a miner, "facts is facts"—but he pronounced them *fax*.

"Lord Lamerton," said a second miner, "wanted to make a new road, and carry it to Chillacot. The cap'n didn't like it, he didn't want to have a station there. He was set against his lordship on that account, for his lordship was a director. If you can prove to me that his lordship wasn't a director, then I shall admit he may have come by his death naturally. I say naught against his lordship for not wanting to have his house undermined, but I do say that the cap'n acted unreasonably and wrongly in not letting the company have Chillacot for the station. If he'd have done that, his lordship would have found us work on the road."

"Ah, Gloyne," called the other miner, "that's it. Fax is fax."

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE RISE OF THE TIDE.

“COME here,” shouted the blacksmith, who was outside his shop, and still wore his apron, and the smut and rust on his hands and face. “Come here, Master Jingles. You’ve come into the midst of us, and we want to know something from you. Where is your father? We’ve seen nothing of him since Friday. If he has not been at mischief, why don’t he come forward like a man? Why don’t your father show his face? He ain’t a tortoise, privileged to draw it in, or a hedgehog, at liberty to coil it up. Where is he? He is not at home. If he is hiding, what is he hiding from unless he be guilty?”

“He may have gone after work”, said young Saltren.

“I heard him say,” said the shoemaker, “that his lordship was doomed to destruction.”

“I know he said it,” answered the black

smith, "and I ask, is a man like to make a prophecy and not try to make what he said come to pass?"

"Human nature is human nature," threw in the tailor.

"And fax is fax," added the miner.

"Then," pursued the blacksmith, "let us look at things as they affect us. His lordship has kept about twenty-three horses—hunters, cobs, ponies and carriage horses—and each has four hoofs, and all wants shoeing once a month, and some every fortnight. That brings me in a good part of my living. Very well. I ask all who hear me, is his lordship like to keep such a stud now he is dead? Is he like to want hunters? I grant you, for the sake of argument, that the young lady and young gentleman will have their cobs and ponies, but will there be anything like as many horses kept as there have been? No, in reason there cannot be. So you may consider what a loss to me is the death of his lordship. My worst personal enemy couldn't have hit me harder than when he knocked Lord Lamerton over the Cleave. He as

much as knocked a dozen or fourteen horses over with him, each with four hoofs at six-pence a shoe, and shod, let us say, eighteen times in the year."

"You are right," put in the tailor, "landed property is tied up, and his lordship's property is tied up—tied up and sealed like mail bags—till the young lord comes of age, which will not be for eleven years. So Blatchford,"—addressing the blacksmith—"you must multiply your horses by eleven."

"That makes," said the smith, working out the sum in chalk on the shutter of the shop, "say fourteen horses eighteen times—two hundred and two—and by four—and again by eleven—and halved because of six-pences, that makes five hundred and fifty-four pounds; then there were odd jobs, but them I won't reckon. Whoever chucked Lord Lamerton down the Cleave chucked five hundred and fifty-four pounds of as honestly-earned money as ever was got, belonging to me, down along with him."

"Fax is fax," said the miner.

“And human nature is human nature to feel it,” added the tailor.

“There’s another thing to be considered,” said a game-keeper. “In the proper sporting season, my lord had down scores of gentlemen to shoot his covers, and that brought me a good many sovereigns and half-sovs. Now, I’d like to know, with the family in mourning, and the young lord not able to handle a gun, will there be a house full of gentlemen? It wouldn’t be decent. And that means the loss of twenty pounds to me—if one penny.”

“Nor is that all,” said the tailor, “you’ll have Macduff to keep an eye on you, not my lord. There’ll be no more chucking of hampers into the goods train as it passes Copley Wood, I reckon.”

The keeper made no other reply than a growl, and drew back.

“There is my daughter Jane, scullery-maid at the Park,” said the shoe-maker, “learning to be a cook. If her ladyship shuts up the house, and leaves the place, what will become of Jane? It isn’t the place I grieve for, nor

the loss of learning, for places ask to be filled now and any one will be taken as cook, if she can do no more than boil water—but it is the perquisites. My wife was uncommon fond of jellies and sweets of all sorts, and I don't suppose these are to be picked off hedges, when the house is empty."

"Here comes Farmer Labett," exclaimed the tailor. "I say," Mr. Labett, did not his lordship let off five-and-twenty per cent. from his rents last fall?"

"That is no concern of yours," replied the farmer.

"But it does concern you," retorted the tailor, "for now that his lordship is dead, the property is tied up and put in the hands of trustees, and trustees can't remit rents. If they were to do so, the young lord, when he comes of age, might be down on them and make them refund out of their own pockets. So that away over the rocks, down the Cleave, went twenty-five per cent. abatement when his lordship fell, or was helped over."

"Ah!" groaned the shoemaker, "and all

them jellies, and blanc-mange, and custards was chucked down along of him."

"And now," said another, "Macduff will have the rule. Afore, if we didn't like what Macduff ordained, we could go direct to his lordship, but now there will be no one above Macduff but trustees, and trustees won't meddle. That will be a pretty state of things, and his wife to ride in a victoria, too."

Then a woman called Tregose pushed her way through the throng, and with loud voice expressed her views.

"I don't see what occasion you men have to grumble. Don't y' see that the family will have to go into mourning, and so get rid of their colours, and we shall get them. There's Miss Arminell's terra-cotta I've had my eye on for my Louisa, but I never reckoned on having it so soon. There never was a wind blowed," argued Mrs. Tregose, "that was an unmixed evil, and didn't blow somebody good. If this here wind have blowed fourteen horses, and jellies and twenty-five per cent. and the keeper's tips over the Cleave—it ha blowed a terra-cotta gown on to my Louisa."

“But,” argued the tailor in his strident voice, “supposing, in consequence of the death, that her ladyship and the young lady and the little lord give up living here, and go for education to London or abroad, where will you be, Mrs. Tregose, for their cast gowns? Your Louisa ain’t going to wear that terra-cotta for eleven years, I reckon.”

“There’s something in that,” assented the woman, and her mouth fell. “Yes,” she said, after a pause for consideration, “who can tell how many beautiful dresses and bonnets and mantles have gone over the Cleave along with the blanc-mange, and the horses and the five-and-twenty per cent.? I’m uncommon sorry now his lordship is dead.”

“I’ve been credibly informed,” said the tailor, “that his lordship laid claim to Chilla-cot, and said that because old Gaffer Saltren squatted there, that did not constitute a title. Does it give a rook a title to a Scotch fir because he builds a nest on it? Can the rook dispose of the timber? Can it refuse to allow the tree to be cut down and sawn up, for and because he have sat on the top of

it? I've an old brood sow in my sty. Does the sty belong to the sow or to me?"

"Fax is fax," assented the miner.

"And," urged the blacksmith, "If his lordship wanted to get the land back, why not? If I lend my ladder to Farmer Eggins, haven't I a right to reclaim it? His lordship asked for the land back, not because he wanted it for himself, but in the interest of the public, to give us a station nigh at hand, instead of forcing us to walk three and a half or four miles, and sweat terrible on a summer's day. And his lordship intended to run a new road to Chillacot, where the station was to be, and so find work for hands out of employ, and he said it would cost him a thousand pounds. And now, there is the new road and all it would have cost as good as thrown over the Cleave along with his lordship."

"The captain—he did it," shouted the blacksmith.

"Fax speak—they are fax. Skin me alive, if they baint," said the miner.

Giles Inglett Saltren had heard enough. He raised his voice and said, "Mr. Blatch-

ford, and the rest of you—some insinuate, others openly assert that my father has been guilty of an odious crime, that he has had a hand in the death of Lord Lamerton.”

He was interrupted by shouts of “He has, he has! We know it!”

“How do you know it? You only suppose it. You have no grounds absolutely, no grounds for basing such a supposition. The coroner, as yourselves admit, refused to listen to the charge.”

A voice: “He was afraid of having his shirt-fronts moulded.”

“Here, again, you bring an accusation as unfounded as it is absurd, against an honourable man and a Crown official. If you had been able to produce a particle of evidence against my father, a particle of evidence to show that what you imagine is not as hollow as a dream, the coroner would have hearkened and acted. Are you aware that this bandying of accusations is an indictable offence? My father has not hurt you in any way.”

This elicited a chorus of cries.

“He has spoiled my shoeing.” “He has

prevented the making of the road." "My wife will never have blanc-mange again." And Samuel Ceely, now arrived on the scene, in whispering voice added, "All my beautiful darlings—twelve of them, as healthy as apples, and took their vaccination well—all gone down the Cleave."

It really seemed as if the happiness, the hopes, the prosperity of all Orleigh, had gone over the edge of the cliff with his lordship.

"I repeat it," exclaimed the young man, waxing warm ; "I repeat it, my father never did you an injury. You are now charging him with hurting you, because you suffer through his lordship's death, and you are eager to find some one on whom to cast blame. As for any real sorrow and sympathy, you have none ; wrapped up in your petty and selfish ends."

A voice : "Fax is fax—he did kill Lord Lamerton."

The tailor : "Human nature is human nature, and nobody can deny he prophesied my lord's death."

"I dare you to charge my father with the

crime," cried young Saltren. "I warn you. I have laid by a little money, and I will spend it in prosecuting the man who does."

"We all do. Prosecute the parish," rose in a general shout.

"My father is incapable of the crime."

"We have no quarrel with you, young Jingles," roared a miner. "Our contention is with the captain. Mates, what do y' say? Shall we pay him a visit?"

"Aye—aye!" from all sides. "Let us show him our minds."

A boisterous voice exclaimed: "We'll serve him out for taking the bread out of our mouths. We'll tumble his house about his ears. He sha'n't stand in our light any more."

And another called, "If you want to prosecute us, we'll provide you with occasion."

Then a stone was flung, which struck Jingles on the head and knocked him down.

For a few minutes the young man was unconscious, or rather confused, he never quite lost his senses. The women clustered about him, and Mrs. Tregose threw water in his face.

He speedily gathered his faculties together, and stood up, rather angry than hurt, to see that nearly all the men had departed. The act of violence, instead of quelling the excitement, had stirred it to greater heat ; and the body of the men, the miners, labourers, the blacksmith, tailor, and shoemaker, their sons and apprentices, went off in a shouting gesticulating rabble in the direction of the Cleave, not of Chillacot, but of the down overhanging it.

In a moment the latent savage, suppressed in those orderly men, was awake and asserting itself. Mr. Welsh had spoken the truth when he told Jingles that the destructive passion was to be found in all ; it was aroused now. The blacksmith, the tailor, the shoemaker, the labourers, had in all their several ways been working constructively all their life, one to make shoes and harrows, one to shape trousers and waistcoats, one to put together boots, others to build, and plant, and stack, and roof, and now, all at once, an appeal came to the suppressed barbarian in each, the chained madman in the asylum, and the de-

structive faculty was loose and rioting in its freedom.

Thomasine Kite stood before the young man. "Now then," she said half mockingly, "if you want to save your mother out of the house before the roof is broke in, you must make haste. Come along with me."

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE FLOW OF THE TIDE.

CAPTAIN SALTREN returned at night to sleep at Chillacot, but he wandered during the day in the woods, with his Bible in his pocket or in his hand, now reading how Gideon was raised up to deliver Israel from Midian, and Samson was set apart from his mother's womb to smite the Philistines, then sitting at the edge of the quarry brooding over his thoughts.

He was not able to fix his mind for long on anything, and he found that the Scripture only interested and arrested his attention so far as it touched on analogous trains of ideas. For the first time in his life a chilling sense of doubt, a cold suspicion of error stole over his heart. When this was the case he was for a moment in agony, his nerves tingled, his throat contracted, and a clammy sweat broke out over his face. The fit passed, and

he was again confident, and in his confidence strong. He raised his voice and intoned a hymn, then became frightened at the sound, and stopped in the midst of a stanza.

Presently he recalled his wife's deceptions and how his heart had foamed and leaped at the thought of the wrong done her and himself, and how he had nourished a deadly hatred against Lord Lamerton on that account. Now he knew that there had been no occasion for this hatred. What had he done to his lordship? Had he really with his hand thrust him over the precipice, or had the nobleman fallen in stepping back to avoid the blow. Either way the guilt, if guilt there were, rested on Saltren's head; but the captain would not listen to the ever welling-up suggestion that there was guilt. It was not he who had killed his lordship, it was the hand of God that had slain him, because the hand of human justice had failed to reach him. The captain entertained little or no personal fear—he was ready, if it were the will of heaven, to appear before magistrates and juries; before them he would testify as

the apostles had testified. If it were the will of heaven that he should die on the gallows, he was ready to ascend the scaffold, sure of receiving the crown of glory ; perhaps the world was not ripe to receive his mission.

When that wave of horror swept over him, no fear of the consequences of his act helped to chill the wave ; his only horrible apprehension was lest he should have made a mistake. This it was that lowered his pulsation, turned his lips blue, and made a cloud come between him and the landscape. He fought against the doubt, battled with it as against a temptation of the Evil One, but as often as he overcame it, it returned. The discovery that he had been deceived by Marianne into believing that Lord Lamerton had injured him, was the little rift in his hitherto unbroken all-enveloping faith ; but even now he had no doubt about the vision, but only as to its purport. That he had seen and heard all that he professed to have seen and heard—that he believed still, but he feared and quaked with apprehension lest he should have misread his revelation.

It is not easy, rather is it impossible, for a man of education, surrounded as he has been from infancy by ten thousand influences to which the inferior classes are not subjected, to understand the self-delusion of such a man.

The critical, sceptical spirit is developed in this century among the cultured classes at an early age, and the child of the present day begins with a *Dubito* not with a *Credo*. Where there is no conviction there can be no enthusiasm, for enthusiasm is the flame that dances about the glowing coals of belief ; and where no fire is, there can be no flame. We allow of any amount of professions, but not of conviction. Zeal is as much a mark of bad breeding as a hoarse guffaw.

Enthusiasms are only endurable when affectations, to be put on and put off at pleasure ; to be trifled with, not to be possessed by. This is an age of toleration ; we tolerate everything but what is earnest, and we lavish our adulation on the pretence, not the reality of sincerity. For we know that a genuine enthusiasm is unsuitable for social

intercourse ; he who is carried away by it is carried beyond the limits of that toleration which allows a little of everything, but exclusiveness to none. He who harbours a belief is not suffered to obtrude it ; if he be a teetotaller he must hide his blue ribbon ; if a Home Ruler, must joke over his shamrock ; if a Quaker ; must dress in colours ; if a Catholic, eat meat on Good Friday. The apostle expressed his desire to be all things to all men ; we have made universal what was then a possibility only to one, we are all things to all men, only sincere neither to ourselves nor to any one. We are like children's penny watches that mark any hour the wearers desire, not chronometers that fix the time for all. How can we be chronometers when we have no main springs, or if we had them, wilfully break them.

We regard all enthusiasms as forms of fever, and quarantine those infected by them ; we watch ourselves against them, we are uneasy when the symptoms appear among our children. At the least quickening of the pulse and kindling of the eye we fly to our

medicine chests for a spiritual narcotic or a sceptical lowering draught.

The new method of dealing with fevers is to plunge the patient in cold water, the reverse of the old method, which was to bring out the heat ; and we apply this improved system to our spiritual fevers, to all these mental attacks bred of convictions. We subdue them with the douche and ice, and the wet blanket. When the priests of Baal invoked their god on Mount Carmel, they leaped upon the altar, and cut themselves with knives ; but Elijah looked on with a supercilious smile, and invited those who followed him to pour buckets of water over his sacrifice ; and with what pity, what contempt we regard all such as are possessed with the divine fury, and are ready to suffer and make themselves ridiculous for their god ; how we water our oblations, and make sure that the sticks on our altar are green and incombustible ; how, if a little spark appears, or a spiral of smoke arises, we turn on hydrants, and our friends rush to our aid with the buckets, and we do not breathe freely till spark and smoke are subdued.

But then, because altars are erected for burnt sacrifices, and a burnt sacrifice is unsavoury, expensive, and unfashionable, we thrust a little coloured tin-foil in among the wet sticks, and protest how natural, how like real fire it looks, and we prostrate ourselves before it in mock homage.

No dread of enthusiasm, no shrinking from conviction, is found among the uneducated, and the semi-educated. Among them enthusiasm is the token of the divine afflatus, as madness is regarded among savages. They respect it, they bring fuel to feed it, they allow it to burst into extravagance, to riot over reason, and to consume every particle of common sense. The corrective, judicial faculty, the balance wheel is deficient; the strength, not the quality of a conviction gives it its command to the respect and adhesion of the many. If I were to break out of Bedlam with the one fixed idea in me that I had eyes at the ends of my ten toes, wherewith I saw everything that went on in the world, and with my big toes saw what was to be in the future; and if I went up and down England

preaching this and declaring what I saw with my toes, and continued preaching it with the fire of perfect sincerity for a twelvemonth, I would shake the hold of the Established Church on the hearts of the people, and make the work of the Liberation Society easy. Half England would form the Church of the seeing toes, but in that Church I would not number any of the cultured.

As for us, we get over our enthusiasms early, as we cut our teeth, and we lose them as rapidly. Primeval man wore his teeth till he died, so do savages of the present day ; but the very milk teeth of our infants decay. We are so familiar with the fact that we assume that all good sets of teeth are false, that if we keep here and there a fang in our jaws, it is carious, and only preserved as a peg to which to wire our sham molars and front teeth. It is so unusual to find any one with a real set, that we look on such a person with suspicion as having in him a stain of barbarous blood.

It is obvious that this defect of real teeth in our jaws has its advantages. It allows us

to change our teeth when we find those we have hitherto worn inconvenient or out of fashion.

It is the same with our convictions, we lose them early, all the inside disappears, leaving but the exterior enamel, and that breaks away finally.

But then, we do not open our mouths to our friends and in society, exposing our deficiencies. We replace what is lost by what looks well, and hold them in position by the fragments of early belief that still project ; and when these artificial articles prove irksome we change them. This is how it is that, for instance, in politics, a man may profess to day one thing, and something quite different to-morrow. No one is shocked, every one understands that this exhibition to-day is unreal, and that to-morrow also unreal.

But, together with the advantage afforded by this power of altering our sets, there is a disadvantage which must not be left unnoticed, which is that the biting and holding power in them is not equal to that possessed by the natural articles.

Patience Kite came upon the captain as he stood in a dream, Bible in hand, but not reading, meditating, and looking far away, yet seeing nothing. She roused him with a hand on his shoulder.

“Do you know what they are about?”

“They! Who?”

“All the parish—the men; the miners out of work, the day-labourers, the tradesmen, all.”

Saltren shook his head; he desired to be left alone to his thoughts, his prayers, his Bible reading.

“They are destroying your house,” said Patience, shaking him, to rouse him, as she would have shaken a sleeper.

“My house? Chillacot?”

“Yes, they are; they are breaking up the rock on the Cleave; and throwing it down on your roof, and smashing it in.”

“My house! Chillacot?” He was still absent in mind. He could not at once withdraw his thoughts from where they had strayed to matters so closely concerning himself.

“It is true; Tamsine came running to me

to tell me about it. Your son managed to get into the house and bring his mother out, and Marianne is like one in a fit, she cannot speak—*that*, if you wish it, is a miracle. The men have set picks and crowbars to work to tumble the stones down on your house and garden, and bury them. Slates and windows are smashed already, and the shrubs broken down in your garden.”

“ My house !—why ? ”

“ Why ? Because you won’t let the railway come along there, and the parish is angry, and thinks the station will be set further from the village. The fellows say you, with your obstinacy, are standing in the way of improvement, and driving trade and money out of the place.”

Stephen Saltren looked at Mrs. Kite with dazed eyes. He could not receive all she said, but he allowed her to lead him through the woods in the direction of Chillacot. He came out with her at the spot where he had stood before and looked on whilst the body of Lord Lamerton was removed from the place where it had fallen.

He stood there now, and looked again, and saw the destruction of the house he loved. A crowd of men and boys were on the down, shouting, laughing, some working, others encouraging them. Those who had crowbars drove them into the turf, and worked through to the rock that came up close to the surface ; then they levered the stones through clefts and faults, out of place, and sent them plunging over the edge of the precipice, accompanied by clouds of dust, and avalanches of rubble. As each piece went leaping and rolling down it was saluted with a cheer, and the men leaned over the edge of the cliff to see where it fell, and what amount of damage was done by it.

The roof of Chillacot was broken through in several places ; the slates at the top of the chimney, set on edge to divert the draught from blowing down it, were knocked off. One huge block had overleaped the house, torn a track through the flower-bed in front, had beat down the entrance gate and there halted, seated on the shattered gate.

Saltren stood looking on with apparent indifference, because he was still unable to realise

what was being done ; but the full importance of the fact that his home was being wrecked came on him with a sudden rush, the blood flew into his face, he uttered a shout of rage, plunged through the bushes, down the hill-side, dashed through the stream below in the valley, ran up to his cottage, and for a moment stood shaking his fist in inarticulate wrath at the men who looked down on him, laughing and jeering from the cliff.

He had forgotten everything now except what was before him, and his anger made him blind and speechless. This was his house, built by his father ; this his garden, tilled by his own hands. Who had a right to touch his property ?

The blacksmith from above shouted to him to stand off, another mass of rock was dislodged and would fall. Saltren could see what menaced. On the piece of rock grew a thorn-tree, and the thorn was swaying against the sky with the exertions of the men leaning on their levers, snapping the ligatures of root-fibre, and opening the joints in the stone. But Saltren had no fear for himself in his fury

at the outrage being done him. Regardless of the warning cries addressed to him, he strode over the broken gate, and entered his partially ruined house.

The blacksmith, alarmed, shouted to the miners engaged on the levers to desist from their work, as Saltren was in the house below ; but they replied that the stone was moving, the crack widening between it and the rock, and that to arrest it was now impossible.

The men held their breath, and were for the moment afraid of the consequence of what they had done. But they breathed freely a moment later, as they saw the captain emerge from his house and cross the garden, and take up a place out of the reach of danger. What they did not notice, or disregarded, was that he had brought out his gun with him. Stephen stood where he could command those on the cliff, and levelled and cocked his gun. His strong jaws were set ; his dark eyebrows drawn over his flashing eyes ; there was not a tremor in his muscles. He watched the swaying thorn ; he saw that in another moment it would come down along with the mass of rock on which it

stood, and which it grappled with its claw-like roots.

“What are you about, cap’n?” asked Mrs. Kite, coming up hastily.

He turned his head, smiled bitterly, and touched the barrel of his gun.

“When that rock comes down,” he said, “one of those above shall follow it.”

At that moment the block parted from the parent rock, and whirled beneath, followed by a train of dust. It struck the corner of the chimney, sent the stones of which it was built flying in all directions, and crashed through the roof, but left the thorn-bush athwart the gap it had torn.

Before Saltren could discharge his gun, Mrs. Kite struck it up, and he fired it into the air.

“You fool!” she said, and then burst into a harsh laugh. “You find fault with others for doing that you approve yourself. You would undermine Orleigh, and object to Chillacot being overthrown.”

CHAPTER XL.

THE END OF A DELUSION.

CAPTAIN SALTREN remained motionless, with his gun raised, as it had been struck up by Patience Kite, for several minutes ; then he slowly lowered it, and turned his face to her. The troubled expression which of late had passed over it at intervals returned. The jaw was no longer set, and the red spots of anger had faded from his cheeks. The momentary character of decision his face had assumed was gone, and now the lips trembled feebly.

“What was that you said ?” he asked.

Patience laughed, and pointed to the crag.

“See,” she exclaimed, “the gun has frightened the men ; and there comes the policeman with your son over the down !” She laughed again. “How the fellows run ! After all, men are cowards.”

“What was that you said when I was about to fire ?” asked the captain again.

“ Said ?—why, what is true. You wanted to rattle down his lordship’s house, and killed him because he refused to allow it to be done ; and now you object to having your own shaken down. But there, that is the way of men.”

Saltren remained brooding in thought, with his eyes on the ground, and the end of the gun resting where his eyes fell.

Mrs. Kite taunted him.

“ You kill the man who won’t let you pull down his house, and you would kill the man who throws down yours. What are you going to do now ? Prosecute them for the mischief, and make them patch up again what they have broken ? or will you give up the point, and let them have their own way, and the railway to run here, with a station to Chillacot ? ”

He did not answer. He was considering Mrs. Kite’s reproach, not her question. Presently he threw the gun away, and turned from his wrecked house.

“ It is true,” he said. “ Our ways are unequal ; it is very true.” He put his hand

over his face, and passed it before his eyes ; his hand was shaking. " I will go back to the Owl's Nest," he said in a low tone.

" What ! leave your house ? Do you not want to secure what has not been broken ? "

" I do not care about my house. I do not care about anything in it. "

" But will you not go and see Marianne—your wife ? You do not know where she is, into what place your son took her, and whether she is ill ? "

He looked at her with a mazed expression, almost as if he were out of his senses, and said slowly—

" I do not care about her any more. " Then, dimly seeing that this calmness needed justification, he added, " I have condemned in others what I allow in myself. I have measured to one in this way, and to myself in that. "

He turned away, and went slowly along the brook to the point at which he had crossed it with Patience Kite after the death of Lord Lamerton, when she led him into the covert of the woods. Mrs. Kite accompanied him now.

They ascended the further hillside together, passing through the coppice, and he remained silent, mechanically thrusting the oak-boughs apart. He seemed to see, to feel nothing, so occupied was he with his own thoughts.

Presently he came out on the open patch where he had stood twice before, once to watch the removal of his victim, next to see the destruction of his house. There now he halted, and brushed his arms down, first the left, then the right with his hands, then passed them over his shoulders as though he were sweeping off him something that clung to and encumbered him.

“They are all gone,” said Mrs. Kite pointing to the headland, “and Jingles is bringing the policeman down to see the mischief that has been done.”

Captain Saltren stood and looked across the valley, but not at his house ; he seemed to have forgotten about it, or lost all concern in it ; he looked away from it, higher up, to the spot whence Lord Lamerton had fallen. Mrs. Kite was puzzled at the expression in his face, and at his peculiar manner. She

had never thought highly of him, now she supposed he was losing his head. Every now and then he put up his hand over his mouth to conceal the contraction and quivering of the lips ; and once she heard him utter a sound which might have been a laugh, but was more like a sob, not in his throat, but in his breast.

That dread of having been a prey to delusions, which had passed over him before, had gained consistency, and burdened him insupportably. Opposite him was the headland whence he had precipitated Lord Lamerton, and now he asked himself why he had done it. Because he believed his lordship had hurt him in his family relations ? In that he was mistaken. Because his lordship stopped the mine and threw him out of work rather than have his house imperilled ? He himself was as resolute in resisting an attack on his own property, an interference with his own house. Because his lordship had occasioned the death of Arkie Tubb ? Now as the veils of prejudice fell, one after another, he saw that no guilt attached to his lordship on that account. The boy had gone in to save Mrs

Kite. It was her fault that he was crushed. She had allowed her daughter, Arkie, all who looked on to believe she was endangered, when she had placed herself in a position of security. The only way in which he could allay the unrest in his mind was to repeat again and again to himself, "It was ordained. The Lord revealed it. There were reasons which I did not know."

There is a moment, we are told by those who have ascended in a balloon, when the cord is cut, and the solid earth is seen to begin to drift below, the trees to dance, and the towers to slide away, that an all but overpowering sense of fear and inclination comes on one to leap from the car at the risk of being dashed to pieces. It is said that the panic produced by an earthquake exceeds every other terror. When a ship is storm-tossed, escape is possible in a boat, when a house is on fire there are feather-beds into which we can leap; but when the earth is insecure, then we have nowhere to which we can flee, nothing to which we can look.

With Captain Saltren, his religious con-

victions were what was most stable. Everything else glided before him as a dream, but he kept his feet on those things that belonged to the spiritual world, as if they were adamantine foundations. And now he was being, like an aeronaut, caught away, and these shifted under his eyes ; like one in an earthquake, he felt the strong bases rock beneath him. The sense of terror that passed over him was akin to despair ; but the last cord was not snapped, and that was the firmest of all—his visions and revelations.

“Of all queer folks,” said Mrs Kite, “I reckon you are the queerest, captain. I thought so from the time I first saw you come and pray on your raft in the pond, and when I heard what a tale you had made out of Miss Arminell throwing a book at you, then I did begin to believe you were not right in your mind ; now I’m sure of it.”

Captain Saltren looked dreamily at her ; but in that dreamy look was pain.

“That was, to be sure, a wonderful tale,” pursued Mrs. Kite, losing patience with him.

“An angel from Heaven cast the Everlasting Gospel down to you, was that it?”

He nodded, but said nothing.

“And I see’d Miss Arminell do it.”

His eyes opened wide with alarm.

“What the name of the book was, I do not mind ; indeed, I do not know, because I cannot read ; but I have got the book, and can show it you, and you who are a scholar can read it through from the first word to the last.”

“You have the book?”

“I have ; when it fell it went under your raft, but it did not sink, it came up after on the other side, and when you were gone I fished it out, and I have it now.”

“It was red as blood.”

“Aye, and the paint came off on my fingers, but I dried it in the sun ; and I have the book now, not in the Owl’s Nest, but in a cupboard of the back kitchen o’ my old house.”

“His likeness was on it.”

“That I can’t say. There is a head of a man.”

“The head of Lord Lamerton.”

“It don’t look like it ; the man has black hair and a beard, and his lordship had no beard, and his hair was light brown.”

A shudder came over the captain. Was his last, his firmest anchor to break ?

Again, as he had done several times already, he passed his hands over his arms and shoulders and sides, as if peeling off what adhered to him.

“Let me see the book,” he said faintly. “Lead on.”

“I ought to have returned it to Miss Arminell,” said Mrs. Kite ; “but I didn’t, because my Tamsine saw it, and said she’d like to read it. She’s mighty fond of what they call a sensational novel.”

“It was the book of the Everlasting Gospel,” said Saltren with a burst of desperation. “Nothing will ever make me believe otherwise.”

“Or that Miss Arminell, who stood in the mouth of the Owl’s Nest, was an angel flying ?”

He made no reply, but lowered his head, and pushed forwards.

When they reached the ruined hovel, Mrs. Kite went into that part which had not been dismantled, and brought forth the crimson-covered book from the oven, where it had been hidden, and gave it to her companion.

“It is ‘The Gilded Clique,’ ” was all he said, and fixed his eyes on it with terror in them.

He dared not look Mrs. Kite in the face ; he stood with lowered head before her, and his hands shook as he held the book, so that he could not study it.

“Tell me all that you heard and saw,” he said ; then with sudden eagerness, “It was not on the Sabbath ? ”

“Yes,” said Mrs. Kite, “it was on a Sunday that I saw you.” Then she told him all the circumstances as they had really happened.

Wondrous are the phantasmagoric pictures conjured up by the sun in the desert ; the traveller looks on and sees blue water, flying sails, palm groves, palaces, and all is so real that he believes he even hears the muezzin’s call to prayer from the minarets, and the lap of the water on the sands, and the chant of

mariners in the vessels. Then up springs a cold air, and in a moment the picture is dissolved and exposes arid waste strewn with bones and utterly herbless. And the words of the woman produced some such an effect on the mind of Saltren. In a minute all the imaginations that had spun themselves out of the little bare fact, and overspread and disguised it, were riven and swept aside.

Captain Saltren stood turning the book about, and looking at the likeness of M. Emile Gaboriau on the cover; it bore not the faintest resemblance to the late Lord Lamerton. The book was headed "Gaboriau's Sensational novels, the Favourite Reading of Prince Bismarck, one shilling." And beneath the medallion was "The Gilded Clique." Sick at heart, with giddy head, Captain Saltren opened the book stained with water, and read, hardly knowing what he did, an advertisement that occupied the fly leaf—an advertisement of "Asiatic Berordnung," for the production of "whiskers, moustaches, and hair, and for the cure of baldness, and the renovation of ladies' scanty partings."

Was this the revelation which had been communicated to him? Was it this which had drawn him on into an ecstasy of fanatical faith which led him to the commission of an unprovoked crime?

Still half-stunned by his fear he read on. "Eminent authorities have expressed their entire approval of the valuable yet perfectly harmless nature of our discovery. In an age like this, when a youthful appearance is so against a young man, those without beard or moustache being designated boys, and scanty hair, eyebrows, and eyelashes, so unproductive of admiration in the fair sex, the Asiatic Berordnung should be universally adopted. Price 1s. 6d. ; full sized bottles 3s. 6d. each."

Captain Saltren's face was in colour like that of a corpse, he raised his eyes for a moment to Mrs. Kite, and saw the mocking laugh on her lips. He dropped them again, and said in a low voice ; "Leave me alone, I cannot think upon what you have said till you are gone."

"I will return to Chillacot and see the ruin," she said.

“The ruin ?” he repeated, “the ruin ?” He had forgotten about his house, he was looking on a greater ruin than that, the desolation of a broken-down faith, and of prostrate self-confidence.

“Mind you do not risk going to the Owl’s Nest,” said Mrs. Kite ; “you are not in condition for that, your knees scarce support you. Abide here and read your book, and see what comfort you can get out of it ; a firm head and a steady foot is needed for that path.”

He made a sign to the woman to go ; he shook as with the palsy ; he put his hand to his head. A band as of iron was tightening about his temples. He could not endure to have Mrs. Kite there any longer. He would go mad unless left alone.

She hesitated for a moment, repeated her injunctions to him to stay where he was till her return, and then left.

He looked after her till she had disappeared, and for some little while after she was gone he looked at the bushes that had closed behind her, fearing lest she should re-

turn ; then he sank down on a heap of stones, put the book from him with a shudder, and buried his head in his hands.

The mirage was past, the dry and hideous reality remained, but Saltren had not as yet quite recovered from the impression of reality that mirage had produced on his mind. We cannot on waking from certain dreams drive them entirely from us, so that they in no way affect our conduct and influence our opinions. I know that sometimes I wake after having dreamed of some amiable and innocent person in an odious light, and though I fight against the impression all day, I cannot view that person without repugnance. Captain Saltren was aware that he had dreamed, that he had believed in the reality of the mirage conjured up by his fancy, had regarded that crimson-covered book as the revelation of the Everlasting Gospel, and though his mind assented to the fact that he had been deceived, he was unable to drive away the glamour of the delusion that clung to him.

I, who write this, know full well that I shall find readers, and encounter critics who

will pronounce the case of Captain Saltren impossible ; because in the London clubs and in country houses no such delusions are found. What ! are we not all engaged in blowing soap-bubbles, in painting mirages, in spinning cobwebs ? But then our soap-bubbles, our mirages, our cobwebs, in which we, unlike spiders, entangle ourselves, are not theological, but social and political. Do we not weave out of our own bowels vast webs, and hang them up in the sight of all as substantial realities ? And are we not surprised with paralysing amazement when we discover that the bubbles we have blown are not new created worlds, and our cobwebs are dissolved by a touch ? I have seen in Innsbruck pictures painted on cobwebs of close texture, with infinite dexterity and patient toil. We not only spin our cobwebs, but paint on them, though I allow we do not picture on them sacred images. Why, my own path is strewn with these gossamer webs of my own weaving that never caught any other midge than my own insignificant self ; me they entangled, they choked my wind-

pipe, they filled my eyes, they clogged my ears. Look back, critical reader, at your own course, and see if it be not encumbered with such torn and trampled cobwebs. There is a great German book of nine volumes, each of over a thousand pages, and it is entitled "The History of Human Folly." Alas, it is not complete ! It gives but the record of the inconceivable follies of a few most salient characters. But in our own towns, in our villages, in our immediate families, what histories of human folly there are unwritten, but well known, I go closer home—in our own lives there is a volume for every year recording our delusions and our inconsequences.

In our Latin grammars we learned "*Nemo omnibus horis sapit*," but that may be better rendered, "*Quis non omnibus horis delirat?*"

The anthropologist and antiquary delight in exploring the kitchen middens of a lost race, heaps of bones, and shells, and broken potsherds rejected by a population that lived in pre-historic times. But, oh, what kitchen middens are about our own selves, at our own

doors, of empty shells and dismarrowed bones of old convictions, old superstitions, old conceits, old ambitions, old hopes ! Where is the meat ? Where the nutriment ? Nowhere ; gone past recall ; only the dead husks, and shells, and bones, and potsherds remain. Open your desk, pull out the secret drawer, and what are revealed ? A dry flower—the refuse scrap of an old passion ; a worthless voucher of a bad investment ; a MS. poem which was refused by every magazine ; a mother's Bible, monument of a dead belief. Go, turn over your own kitchen middens, and then come and argue with me that such a delusion as that of Captain Saltren is impossible. I tell you it is paralleled every year.

And now, sitting on the heap of stones, full of doubt, and yet not altogether a prey to despair, Captain Saltren took the red book again, and began to read it, first at the beginning, then turning to the middle, then looking to the end. Then he put it from him once more, and, with the cold sweat streaming over his face, he walked to the edge of the

quarry, and there knelt down to pray. Had he been deceived? Was he not now subjected to a fiery trial of his faith—a last assault of the Evil One? This was indeed a possibility, and it was a possibility to which he clung desperately.

A little while ago we saw Giles Saltren humiliated and crushed, passing through the flame of disappointment and disenchantment, the purgatorial flame that in this life tries every man. In that fire the young man's self-esteem and self-reliance had shrivelled up and been reduced to ash. And now his reputed father entered the same furnace.

He prayed and wrestled in spirit, wringing his hands, and with sweat and tears mingled streaming down his cheeks. He prayed that he might be given a token. He could not, he would not, accept the humiliation. He fought against it with all the powers of his soul and mind.

Then he stood up. He was resolved what to do. He would walk along the ledge of rock to the Owl's Nest, holding the red book in his hand instead of clinging to the ivy

bands. If that book stayed him up and sustained him in equilibrium till he reached the Cave, then he would still believe in his mission, and the revelations that attended it. But if he had erred, why then—

Holding the book he began the perilous walk. He took three steps forward, and then the judgment was pronounced.

CHAPTER XLI.

SOCIAL SUICIDE.

WHEN Giles Saltren had left town to return to Orleigh his uncle remained with Arminell. The girl asked Mr. Welsh to leave her for half an hour to collect her thoughts and resolve on what she would do ; and he went off to the British Museum to look at the marbles till he considered she had been allowed sufficient time to decide her course, and then he returned to the inn. She was ready for him, composed, seated on the sofa, pale, and dark under the eyes.

“Well, Miss Inglett,” said Welsh, “I’ve been studying the busts of the Roman Emperors and their wives, and imagining them dressed in our nineteenth-century costume ; and, upon my word, I believe they would pass for ordinary English men and women. I believe dress has much to do with the determination of character. Con-

ceive of Domitian in a light, modern summer suit—in that he could not be bloodthirsty and a tyrant. Imagine me in a toga, and you may imagine me committing any monstrosity. Dress does it. How about your affairs? Are you going to Aunt Hermione?”

“To Lady Hermione Woodhead?” corrected Arminell, with a touch of haughtiness. “No.”

“Then what will you do? I’ll take the liberty of a chair.” He seated himself. “I can’t get their busts out of my head—however, go on.”

“Mr. Welsh, I wish to state to you exactly what I have done, and let you see how I am circumstanced. I have formed my own opinion as to what I must do, and I shall be glad afterwards to hear what you think of my determination. You have shown me kindness in coming here, and offering your help, and I am not so ungracious as to refuse to accept, to some extent, the help so readily offered.”

“I shall be proud, young lady.”

“Let me then proceed to tell you how

stands the case, and then you will comprehend why I have taken my resolution, I ran away from home with your nephew, moved by a vague romantic dream, which, when I try to recall, partly escapes me, and appears to me now altogether absurd."

"You were not dressed for the part," threw in Welsh. "You could no more be the heroine in modern vest and the now fashionable hat, than I could commit the crimes of Cæsar in this suit."

"In the first place," pursued Arminell, disregarding the interruption, "I was filled with the spirit of unrest and discontent, which made me undervalue everything I had, and crave for and over-estimate everything I had not. With my mind ill at ease, I was ready to catch at whatever chance offered of escape from the vulgar round of daily life, and plunge into a new, heroic and exciting career. The chance came. Your nephew believed that he was my half-brother."

"Young Jack-an-apes!" intercalated Welsh.

"That he was my dear father's son by a former fictitious marriage with your sister

Mrs. Saltren, I believed, as firmly as your nephew believed it ; and I was extremely indignant with my poor father for what I thought was his dishonourable conduct in the matter, and for the hypocrisy of his after life. I thought that, if I ran away with your nephew, I would force him—I mean my lord—to acknowledge the tie, and so do an act of tardy justice to his son. Then, in the next place, I was filled with exalted ideas of what we ought to do in this world, that we were to be social knights errant, rambling about at our own free will, redressing wrongs, and I despised the sober virtues of my father, and the ordinary social duties, with the execution of which my step-mother filled up her life. I thought that a brilliant career was open to your nephew, and that I might take a share in it, that we would make ourselves names, and effect great things for the social regeneration of the age. It was all nonsense and moonshine. I see that clearly enough now. My wonder is that I did not see it before. But the step has been taken and cannot be recalled. I have broken with my family and

with my class, I cannot ask to have links rewelded which I wilfully snapped, to be re-installed in a place I deliberately vacated. Nemesis has overtaken me, and even the gods bow to Nemesis."

"You are exaggerating," interrupted Welsh; "you have, I admit, acted like a donkey—excuse the expression, no other is as forcible and as true—but I find no such irretrievable mischief done as you suppose. Fortunately the mistake has been corrected at once. If you will go home, or to Lady Woodhead—"

"Lady Hermione Woodhead," corrected Arminell.

"Or to Lady Hermione Woodhead—all will be well. What might have been a catastrophe is averted."

"No," answered Arminell, "all will not be well. Excuse me if I flatly contradict you. There is something else you have not reckoned on, but which I must take into my calculations. I shall never forget what I have done, never forgive myself for having embittered the last moments of my dear father's life, never for having thought unworthily of him,

and let him see that he had lost my esteem. If I were to return home, now or later from my aunt's house, I could not shake off the sense of self-reproach, of self-loathing which I now feel. There is one way, and one way only, in which I can recover my self-respect and peace of mind."

"And that is—?"

"By not going home."

"Well—go to your aunt's."

"I should be there for a month, and after that must return to Orleigh. No—that is not possible. Do you not see that several reasons conspire against my taking that course?"

"Pray let me know them."

"In the first place, it is certain to have leaked out that I ran away from home. My conduct will be talked about and commented on in Orleigh, in the county. It will become part of the scandal published in the society papers, and be read and laughed over by the clerks and shop-girls who take in these papers, whose diet it is. Everywhere, in all classes, the story will be told how the Honour-

able Arminell Inglett, only daughter of Giles, tenth Baron Lamerton of Orleigh, and his first wife, the Lady Lucy Hele, daughter of the Earl of Anstey, had eloped with the son of a mining captain, the tutor to her half-brother, and how that they were discovered together in a little inn in Bloomsbury."

"No," said Welsh, impatiently. "If you will act as Jingles has suggested, this will never be known. He is back at Orleigh, or will be there this afternoon, and you will be at Portland Place, where your maid will find you. What more natural than that you should return to-morrow home, on account of your father's death? As for the society papers—if they get an inkling of the real facts—I am connected with the press. I can snuff the light out. There are ways and means. Leave that to me."

"But, Mr. Welsh, suppose that suspicion has been roused at Orleigh—Mrs. Cribbage has to be considered. That woman will not leave a stone unturned till she has routed out everything. I used to say that was why the finger ends were always out of her gloves.

I would have to equivocate, and perhaps to lie, when asked point-blank questions which if answered would betray the truth. I would be putting my dear step-mother to the same inconvenience and humiliation."

"Trust her wit and knowledge of the world to evade Mrs. Cribbage."

"But I cannot. I have not the wit."

Mr. Welsh was vexed, he stamped impatiently.

"I can't follow you in this," he said.

"Well, Mr. Welsh, then perhaps you may in what I give you as my next reason. I feel bound morally to take the consequences of my act. When a wretched girl flings herself over London Bridge, perhaps she feels a spasm of regret for the life she is throwing away, as the water closes over her, but she drowns all the same."

"Not at all, when there are boats put forth to the rescue, and hands extended to haul her in."

"To rescue her for what?—To be brought before a magistrate, and to have her miserable story published in the daily penny

papers. Why, Mr. Welsh, her friends regret that her body was not rolled down into the deep sea, or smothered under a bed of Thames mud; that were better than the publication of her infamy."

"What will you have?"

"I have made the plunge; I must go down."

"Not if I can pull you out."

"You cannot pull me out. I made my leap out of my social order. What I have done has been to commit social suicide. There is no recovery for me save at a cost which I refuse to pay. I have heard that those who have been half drowned suffer infinite agonies on the return of vitality. I shrink from these pains. I know what it would be were I fished up and thrown on my own shore again. I would tingle and smart in every fibre of my consciousness, and cry out to be cast in again. No, Mr. Welsh, through youthful impetuosity and wrong-headedness I have jumped out of my social world, and I must abide by the consequences. As the Honourable Arminell Inglett I have

ceased to exist. I die out of the peerage, die out of my order, die out of the recognition, though not the memory of my relatives. But I live on as plain Miss Inglett, one of the countless members of the great Middle Class."

James Welsh looked at the girl with puzzlement in his face. Spots of flame had come into her pale cheeks, and to the temples, as she spoke, and she moved her slender fingers on her lap in her eagerness to make herself explicit and her difficulties intelligible.

"I don't understand you, Miss Inglett. That is, I do not see what is your intention."

"I mean that I have committed social suicide, and I do not wish to be saved either for my friends' sake or for my own. I ask you kindly to get my death inserted in the *Times* and the other daily papers."

"Your actual death?"

"A statement that on such a day died the Honourable Arminell Inglett, only daughter of the late Lord Lamerton. That will suffice; it proclaims to society that I have ceased to belong to it. Of course my dear

step-mother and my aunt and the family solicitors shall know the truth. I have money that comes to me from my mother. A statement of my death in the *Times* will not constitute legal death, but it will suffice to establish my social death."

"You are taking an extraordinary and unwarrantable course."

"Extraordinary it may be, but not unwarranted. I have the justification within, in my conscience. When one has done that which is wrong, one is called to suffer for it, and the conscience is never cleansed and restored without expiating pains. If I were to return to Orleigh I would die morally, of that I am sure, because it would be a shirking of the consequences which my foolish act has brought down on me."

"There may be something in that," said Welsh.

"I will write to Lady Lamerton and tell her everything and assure her that my decision is irrevocable. I have caused her so much pain, I have behaved so badly to my father, I have been so ungrateful for all the

happy days and pleasant comforts of dear, dear Orleigh"—her eyes filled with tears, and she was unable to finish her sentence.

Mr. Welsh said nothing.

"No," she said, after a pause—"No, Mr] Welsh, I cannot in conscience go home, there to dissemble and lie to Mrs. Cribbage and to neighbours; and never to be able to shake off the sense of self-reproach for not having frankly accepted the results of my own misconduct. Do you know, Mr. Welsh, I was angry with my father because I thought he was evading his retribution?"

Mr. Welsh, usually a talkative man, felt no inclination now to say a word.

"Mr. Welsh," said Arminell, "I ask you to go to Portland Place, call on Lady Hermione Woodhead, she is a practical woman of the world; lay the entire case before her, and see if she does not say, 'Throw her in again, for Heaven's sake, so as to keep the story out of the papers.'"

"And if her ladyship does not say so?"

"She will say it."

"If she does not, but asks me to bring you to her, will you go to Portland Place?"

"No; my resolution is taken."

Welsh stood up and paced the room.

"What the deuce will you do?" he asked. "You are quite a girl, and a pretty girl, and confoundedly inexperienced. You cannot, you must not live alone. My Tryphœna is a good soul; it is true that we are without a cook, but if you do not object to rissoles I shall be happy to offer you such hospitality as my house affords. Shepherd's Bush is not the most aristocratic quarter of the town, but Poplar is worse; it is not near the theatres and the parks, but you're welcome to it. Your idea is startling. I'll go into that *cul-de-sac*, Queen's Square, where runs no cab, no 'bus does rumble, and consider it there."

"Will you see my aunt, Lady Hermione? It will save me writing, and you can explain the circumstances by word better than I can tell them with a pen."

"Bless me! I have a mind to do so." He stopped, went to the window, came back,

and said abruptly, "Yes, I will. God bless me! To think that I—I of all men, a raging Democrat, should be hansomg to and fro between my Ladies and Honourables."

"You can do what will give you pleasure," said the girl with a faint smile—"with a stroke of the pen convert the Honourable Arminell into plain Miss Inglett."

He did not laugh at the sally. He came in front of her, and stood contemplating her, with his hands behind his back.

"God bless me!" he said, "one can be heroic after all in modern costume. I didn't think it. Well, I will go, but write me a line to ensure her receiving me in the morning."

Arminell did as required.

When she had finished the note and was folding it, she looked up at Welsh, and asked, "Have you read the Hecuba?"

"The Hecuba? Classic? Not even in Bohn's translation."

"Then the saying of Hecuba to Polyxenes will not occur to you: 'I am dead before my death, through my ills.'"

"I will go," he said, and held out his hand.
"Give me a shake—it will do me good."

"But, Mr. Welsh, you will return to me?"

"Yes." His mouth and eyes were twitching.

"Deuce take it! an aristocrat can do an heroic thing even with a vest and toupee."

Two hours later the journalist returned.

"Confound these aristocrats," he said, as he entered, hot and puffing. "They live in daily, hourly terror of public opinion. I wouldn't be one of them, existing in such a state of quivering terror, not for anything you could offer me. They are like a man I knew who spent all his energies in fighting against draughts. He put sandbags to the bottom of his doors, stuffed cotton-wool into the crevices of his windows, papered over the joints of his flooring, corked up the key-holes, and yet was always catching catarrh from draughts that came from—no one knows where. What they fear is breath—the breath of public opinion."

"What did my aunt say?" asked Arminell.

“ Say? In the most elegant and round-about way what may be summarized in four words—‘ Chuck her in again.’ ”

“ I said as much.”

“ Come, Miss Inglett. I have telegraphed to Tryphœna to do two extra rissoles. We shall pass the stores, and I’ll buy a tin of prawns and a bottle of Noyeau jelly. Pack up your traps. The cab is at the door. Sorry to-day is Monday, or you should have had something better than rissoles.”

CHAPTER XLII.

SHEPHERD'S BUSH.

“ HERE we are,” said Mr. Welsh, “ The Avenue—the most stylish part of Shepherd’s Bush, as it is of New York. You sit still in the fly whilst I go in and make an explanation to her ladyship. I’ll take that bottle of Noyeau you have been nursing ; I have the canister of prawns in my coat-pocket ; I am sorry before purchasing it that I forgot to ask you if you preferred Loch Awe salmon. What is your favourite tippie ? You will hear from my wife that we have no cook. The last we got became inebriated, and we had to dismiss her. We have been without one for a fortnight. Tryphœna—that is, her ladyship—upon my word I have been so mixed up with aristocrats of late, that I find myself giving a title to every one I meet. What was I saying ? Oh ! that her ladyship has all the cooking to do now ? You sit

quiet. No fumbling after your purse ; I pay the cabby because I engaged him. 'We of the Upper Ten, under present depression, do not keep our own carriages and livery servants—we hire as we want.'

Under all Welsh's rollicking humour lay real kindness of heart. Arminell felt it, and drew towards this man, so unlike any other man with whom she was acquainted, or whom she had met. She knew that he was perfectly reliable, that he would do everything in his power to serve her, and that a vast store of tenderness and consideration lay veiled under an affectation of boisterousness and burlesque.

How is it that when we do a kindness we endeavour to minimise it? We disguise the fact that what we do costs us something, that it gives us trouble, that it draws down on us irksome responsibilities? It is not that we are ashamed of ourselves for doing kindnesses, that we think it unmanly to be unselfish, but rather that we fear to embarrass the person who receives favours at our hands.

Mr. Welsh had really sacrificed much that

day for Arminell. He was to have met an editor and arranged with him for articles for his paper. He had not kept his appointment; that might possibly be resented, and lead to pecuniary loss, to some one else being engaged in his room. Editors are unforgiving. "Yes," said Mr. Welsh that same afternoon, when he found that what he dreaded had occurred, "a Domitian is possible still in our costume, but the tyrants confine their ferocity to aspirants after literary work. They cut off their heads, they put out their eyes, and they disjoint their noses wholesale."

Presently Welsh put his head to the cab door and said cheerfully, "All right, I've broken it to her ladyship. She don't know all. You are a distant and disowned relative of the noble house of Lamerton. That is what I have told her; and I am your guardian for the time. I have explained. Come in. The maid-of-all-work don't clean herself till the afternoon, and is now in hiding behind the hall door. She spends the morning in accumulating the dirt of the house on her person, when no one is expected to call, and

she scrubs it off after lunch." He opened the cab door, and conducted her into the house. "I will lug the slavey out from behind the door," he said, "if you will step into the dining room ; and then she and I will get the luggage from the cab. Your room is not yet ready. Go in there." He opened the door on his left, and ushered Arminell into the little apartment.

"Excuse me if I leave you," he said, "and excuse Mrs. Welsh for a bit. She is rummaging somewhere. We have, as she will tell you presently, no cook. The last—" he made pantomimic signs of putting a bottle to his lips. Then he went out, and for a while there reached Arminell from the narrow front passage, somewhat grandly designated the hall, sounds of the moving of her luggage.

A moment later, and a whispered conversation from outside the door reached her ears.

"It's no use—there are only scraps. How can you suggest rissoles ? There is no time for the preparation of delicacies. If we are to have them, it must be for dinner. I did not expect you at noon, much less that you

would be bringing a visitor. Your telegram arrived one minute before yourself."

"Not so loud," whispered James Welsh, "or she will hear. You must provide enough to eat, of course. Send out for steak."

"Nonsense, James ; it is lunch time already. She must manage with scraps, and them cold scraps are wholesome. What doesn't poison fattens."

"You couldn't, I suppose, have the scraps warmed, or"—somewhat louder, with a flash of inspiration—"or converted into a haricot?"

"How can you talk like this, James ? Go on, suggest that they shall be made into a mayonnaise next. To have hot meat means a fire, and there is none to speak of in the kitchen."

"Only dead scraps ! My dear Tryphœna, she belongs to a titled family, a long way off and disowned, you understand, but still—there is a title in the family and—scraps !"

"What else will you have, James ? Had you been home yesterday for dinner, there would have been joint, roast ; but as you were

not, I ate cold meat. Now there are only scraps."

"Perhaps if you were to turn out the Noyeau jelly in a shape, Tryphœna, it would give the lunch a more distinguished look."

"Scraps of cold boiled mutton and Noyeau jelly! No, that won't do. The jelly must be warmed and melted into the shape, and take three hours to cool."

"I wish I had taken her to the Holborn Restaurant," groaned Welsh; "what difficulties encumber domestic arrangements!"

"Without a cook—yes," added his wife.

"Do go in and welcome her," urged Mr. Welsh.

"I cannot in this condition. You know I have no cook, and must attend to everything. The girl has been impudent this morning, and has given me notice."

Whilst this discussion was being carried on, Arminell tried not to listen, but the whispers were pitched so high, and were so articulate that scarce a word escaped her.

Then Mr. Welsh whispered, "Do lower your voice, Tryphœna," and the pair drifted

down the passage to the head of the kitchen steps, and what was further discussed there was inaudible.

Arminell looked round the room. Its most prominent feature was the gas-lamp with double burner and globes—the latter a little smoked, suspended from the ceiling by a telescopic tube that allowed just sufficient gas to escape at the joints to advertise itself as gas, not paraffin or electric fluid. This room was the one in which, apparently, Mrs. Welsh sat when she had a cook, and was not engrossed in domestic affairs. Her work-box, knitting, a railway novel, bills paid and unpaid, and one of Mr. Welsh's stockings with a hole in the heel, showed that she occupied this apartment occasionally.

The door opened, and Mrs. Welsh entered, followed by her husband. She was a stout lady with a flat face, and a pair of large dark eyes, her only beauty. Her hair was not tidy, nor were all the buttons and hooks in place and performing their proper functions about her body.

“How do you do?” she said, extending

her hand ; “I’m sorry to say I have no cook ; nothing is more difficult than to find cooks with characters now-a-days ; ladies will give such false characters. What I say is, tell the truth, whatever comes of it. My last cook had a glowing character from the lady with whom she lived in Belgrave Square. I assure you she was in a superior house, quite aristocratic—carriage people ; but I could not keep her. I did not myself find out that she drank. I did not suspect it. I knew she was flighty—but at last she went up a ladder, sixty feet high, and could hardly be got down again. It was in an adjoining builder’s yard. The ladder leaned against nothing, it pointed to the sky, and she went up it, and though a stout and elderly woman, looked no bigger than a fly when she had reached the top. Won’t you sit down ? or stay—let me take you up to the parlour. We will have the table laid directly for lunch. Mr. Welsh does not generally come home at this time of day, so I was unprepared, and I have no cook. The ladder began to sway with her, for she became nervous at the top, and afraid to come

down ; quite a crowd collected. Do take off your things. Your room will be ready presently. In the meantime you can lay your bonnet in the drawing-room. I am short of hands now. The steps are rather narrow and steep, but I will lead the way. I'll see to having water and soap and a towel taken to the best bed-room presently, but my servant is now making herself neat. None of the police liked to go up the ladder after my cook. The united weights at the top, sixty feet, would have made it sway like a bulrush, and perhaps break. This is the drawing-room. Do make yourself comfortable in it and excuse me. My father and mother were carriage people. There he is in his uniform, between the windows, taken when he was courting my mother. You will excuse me, or the girl will spread a dirty instead of a clean tablecloth for lunch. Dear me, the blinds have not been drawn up ! ”

Then Mrs. Welsh departed. All men and women trail shadows behind them when the sun shines in their faces, but some women, in all conditions of the heavens, drag behind

them braid. It would seem as if they had their skirts bound to come undone. As in the classic world certain females were described as being with relaxed zones, so are there females in the modern world in a perpetual condition of relaxed bindings. If Mrs. Welsh had lived in a palæozoic period, when the beasts that inhabited the globe impressed their footprints on the pliant ooze, what perplexity her traces would now produce among the palæontologists, and what triumph in the minds of the anthropologists, who would conclude that these were the footprints of the *homo caudatus*, the missing link between the ape and man, and point in evidence to the furrow accompanying the impressions of the feet; and Mrs. Welsh always did wear a tail, but the tail was of black binding, sometimes looped, sometimes dragging in ends. As Arminell followed Mrs. Welsh up the stairs, she had to keep well in the rear to avoid treading on this tail.

On reaching the drawing-room, Arminell laid her bonnet and cloak on the sofa, and looked round the room as she looked about

that below. The latter had been dreary to the eyes, the former had the superadded dreariness of pretence.

Houses that are uninhabited are haunted by ghosts, and unoccupied rooms by smells. The carpet, the curtains, the wall-paper, the chintz covers, the cold fire-place, send forth odours urgent to attract attention, as soon as the door opens. They are so seldom seen that they *will* be smelt.

The drawing-room in the Avenue was small, with two narrow windows to it ; the walls were papered with an æsthetic dado of bulrushes and water weeds, on a pea-green base ; above that ran a pattern picked out with gold, a self-assertive paper. Above the marble mantelshelf was a chimney-piece of looking-glasses and shelves, on which stood several pieces of cheap modern china, mostly Japanese, such as are seen outside Graves in Oxford Street, in baskets, labelled, "Any of this lot for 2d."

Against the wall opposite the windows were two blue Delft plates, hung by wires. Between the windows was the miniature of

the father of Mrs. Welsh, once a carriage-man, but not looking it, wearing the uniform of a marine officer, and the languishment of a lover. He was represented with a waxy face, a curl on his brow, and either water or wadding on his chest.

Upon the table were books radiating from a central opal specimen glass that contained three or four dry everlastings, smelling like corduroys; and the books in very bright cloth had their leaves glued together with the gilding.

Unhappy, occupied with her own trouble though Arminell was, yet she noted these things because they were so different from that to which she was accustomed. Perhaps the rawness of the decoration, the strain after impossible effect, struck Arminell more than the lack of taste. She had been accustomed to furniture and domestic decoration pitched in a key below that of the occupants, but here everything was screwed up above that of such as were supposed to use the room. Elsewhere she had seen chairs and sofas to be sat on, carpets to be walked on, books to

be read, wall papers to be covered with paintings. Here even the sun was not allowed to touch the carpet, and the chairs were to be made use of gingerly, and the fire-irons not to be employed at all, and the grate most rarely. After Arminell had spent half-an-hour in this parlour, the whole house reverberated with the boom of a gong; and next moment Mrs. Welsh came in to say that lunch was ready. She had in the meantime dressed herself to do the honours of the meal; had changed her gown, then brushed her hair, and put on rings. Nevertheless she lacked finish. The brooch was not fastened, and threatened to fall, and her dress improver had not been accurately and symmetrically fitted to her person.

“Welsh,” she said, “has departed. He is very sorry, but business calls must be attended to. Never mind, I’ll do what I can to entertain you. I will tell you the end of the story of my cook up a ladder. Ah!” she exclaimed on reaching the foot of the stairs—“is that your umbrella fallen on the floor? You stuck it up against the wall, no

doubt. The gong has done it, shaken it down with the vibration."

The lunch was plain, but the good lady had made an effort to give it the semblance of elegance. She had sent out for parsley to garnish the cold mutton, and for a dish of lettuce and another of watercress, and had set a just uncorked bottle of Castle A Claret on the table beside Arminell's plate.

"You'll excuse if we help ourselves and dispense with the girl," said Mrs. Welsh. "Have you had much to do with servants? I have applied to the registry offices for a cook and can't get one; they object to Shepherd's Bush, or else want to redeem their characters at my expense. I have applied at the hospital for a convalescent, but if I get one she will not be up to much work, and besides will have been so pampered in hospital, that she will not accommodate herself to our fare, and will leave as soon as she is well. If we were carriage people, it would be different. Servants won't remain in a situation where a carriage and pair are not kept. They think it immoral. Were your

parents carriage people? And did your mother have much trouble with her servants? And, if I may ask, where did she go to for her cooks? ”

“ My mother died shortly after my birth, and my father recently.” Arminell spoke with a choke in her voice. “ I have not had time to get mourning. I must do some shopping this afternoon.”

“ I can show you where you can get things very cheap. You take a 'bus along Goldhawk Road ; it costs but twopence if you walk as far as Shepherd's Bush Station, otherwise it comes to threepence. I suppose you have kept home for your father? Did you meet with impertinence from servants? But I dare say you kept your carriage. If you don't do that they regard you as their equals. They divide mankind into castes—the lowest keep no conveyances, the middle have one-horse traps, and the superior and highest of all keep a pair and close carriage. My parents were carriage people—indeed, my father was an officer in her Majesty's service. My husband will some day, I trust, have his

equipage. His sister is very intimate with people of distinction. I don't mean carriage people only, but titled persons, the highest nobility. She was a bosom friend of the dowager Lady Lamerton, she told me so herself. I almost expect the Lamerton family to call on me. Should they do so whilst you are here, I shall be happy to introduce you. By the way—your name is Inglett, you must be a distant connexion of the family. James said you were related to a noble family, but that they did not receive you. In the event of a call, perhaps you would prefer to remain in the dining-room. My husband's nephew is called after his lordship, Giles Inglett, because my lord stood godfather to him at the font. I assure you the intimacy between Marianne and the family is most cordial. I wonder what Mrs. Tomkins over the way will say when their carriage stops at my gate! What a pity it is that the British nobility should be the hotbed of vice."

"Is it?" asked Arminell listlessly.

"Indeed it is. I know a great deal about the aristocracy. My sister-in-law moves in

the highest circles. I read all the divorce cases in high life, and I have an intimate friend who is much in great houses—in fact, she nurses there. Persons of good family when reduced in circumstances become trained nurses. This lady has nursed Sir Lionel Trumpington, and I could tell you a thing or two about his family she has confided to me—but you are not married. She had the charge of chief Justice Bacon’s daughter, who was a dipsomaniac, and so had the *entrée* into the best families, and has told me the most extraordinary and shocking stories about them.”

After lunch, Mrs. Welsh said, “There now, go up to the parlour, and sit there an hour, till I am ready. I must see that the girl does your room, after which I will put on my walking clothes. I will take you where you can get crape, just a little crumpled and off colour, at half-price. We will walk to the railway arch and so save a penny.”

Arminell sat by herself in the drawing-room; the sun was streaming in, but Mrs. Welsh allowed the blinds to remain undrawn.

She stood hesitatingly with hand raised to draw them, but went away, leaving them rolled up, a concession to the presence of a visitor.

Arminell's mind turned from her own troubles to the consideration of the life Mrs. Welsh and those of her social grade led. How utterly uninteresting, commonplace, aimless it seemed; how made up of small pretences, absurd vanities, petty weaknesses, and considerable follies! A few days ago, such a revelation of sordid middle-class triviality would have amused her. Now it did not. She saw something beside all the littleness and affectation, something which dignified it.

Everywhere in life is to be observed a straining after what is above; and the wretched drunken cook scrambling up a ladder that led to nothing, blindly exemplified the universal tendency. As among the plants in a garden, and the trees of a plantation, there is manifest an upward struggle, so is it in the gardens and plantations of humanity. The servant, as Mrs. Welsh had said, is not content to serve where no servant is kept, and changes

to a situation where there is a pony-chaise ; then feels a yearning in her that fills her with unrest till she has got into a sphere where there is a one-horse brougham, and deserts that again for the house that maintains a landau and pair. In the lower class an effort is made to emulate the citizens of the middle class, in dress and arrangement of hair, and mode of speech ; and in the middle class is apparent protracted effort to reach the higher ; or if it cannot be reached, to hang on to it by a miniature and a sister-in-law, and a trained nurse friend. Is this ridiculous ? Of course it is ridiculous to see cooks scrambling up ladders that reach nowhere, but it is infinitely better that they should do this than throw themselves into the gutter. And so thought Arminell now. Mrs. Welsh may have been absurd, but behind all her nonsense beat a true and generous heart, full of aspiration after something better, and a cheerful spirit of hospitality and self-sacrifice. No. Arminell saw the struggle in the woman's face about the blinds, and respected her. But when she was gone, the girl stood up, went to the

windows, and drew down the blinds, to save from fading Mrs. Welsh's new gaudy carpet.

CHAPTER XLIII.

DOWSING.

A FEW days later, towards evening, Mr. James Welsh arrived, after having been absent from home. He had not told his wife or Arminell the cause of his departure, nor whither he was going. When he returned, he informed Arminell that he had been away on business, and that he wanted a word with her in the parlour.

“There is no gas in the drawing-room. Will you have a lamp?” asked Mrs. Welsh.

“Thank you. It will be unnecessary. At this time of the year it is not dark, and the dusk is agreeable for a *tête-à-tête*. My business does not need reference to papers.”

“Then I will go down and see about locking up the remains of the plum-pudding. The girl has had her share set apart on a plate, and I object to her consuming everything that goes out from dinner. There is

enough of the pudding left to serve up fried to-morrow."

Arminell and Mr. Welsh mounted the steep stairs to the sitting-room. The parlour was close and stuffy: Welsh went to the window and opened it a little way.

"Do sit down, Miss Inglett," he said, "there, on the sofa, with your back to the window, if you are not afraid of a breath of air. This twilight is restful to the eyes and grateful to the overwrought brain. There is no need for candles." He seated himself away from her, looking in another direction, and said, "I suppose you can guess where I have been?"

"Indeed I cannot, Mr. Welsh."

"I have been at Orleigh. I thought I would like to be present at your father's funeral. Besides, I belong to the press, and my duties took me there. Also, my sister is left a widow. You may not, perhaps, have heard of the death of Captain Saltren?"

"Captain Saltren dead!"

"Yes, drowned in the old quarry pit."

"I remember having once seen him there.

He was a strange man. He went there to say his prayers, and he prayed on a kind of raft of his own construction. I suppose it gave way under him, or he overbalanced himself."

"Possibly. How he fell is not known. He was very strange in his manner of late, so that the general opinion is that he was off his head. He had visions, or fancied that he had."

Arminell said no more on this matter. She was desirous of hearing about her father's funeral.

"I was present when Lord Lamerton was taken to his last rest," said Welsh; "you cannot have any conception what an amount of feeling was elicited by his death. By me it was unexpected. I could not have supposed that the people, as distinguished from the aristocracy, would have been other than coldly respectful, but his lordship must have been greatly beloved." Welsh paused, and rubbed his chin. "Yes, much loved. Of course, I had only seen one side of him, and that was the side I cared to see, being a pro-

fessional man, and professionally engaged to see only one side. That is in the way of business, and just as a timber merchant measures a tree, and estimates it by the amount of plank it will make, regardless of its effect in the landscape, so it is with me. I look on a man, especially a nobleman, from a commercial point of view, and ask how many feet of type I can get out of him. I don't consider him for any other qualities he may have than those which serve my object. But I will admit that there must have been a large amount of kindness and sterling worth in his lordship, or there would not have been such a demonstration at his funeral, and that not by a party, but general—not cooked, but spontaneous. One expected to see the quality at the funeral, but what surprised me was the real sorrow expressed by the people. Why, bless you! what do you think? Because Captain Saltren had denounced his lordship, and prophesied his death, the mob rolled stones down the cliff on Chillacot and ruined the house and spoiled the garden.”

Pope Leo X. was inaccessible except to

buffoons, and when a priest desired an interview with his Holiness, but was unable to obtain one in the ordinary manner, he dressed himself in motley, and as a clown obtained immediate admission.

There are some people who suppose that every one else has the peculiarities of Leo X., and who never approach their fellows, even when they have to speak on matters of serious import, without putting on cap and bells. They labour under the conviction that "the motley," as Jaques said to the Duke, "is the only wear," especially when most inappropriate to the matter of discourse.

Mr. Welsh was desirous of doing what was kind, of conveying to Arminell what he knew was to her painful information, describing to her scenes which must stir her emotions, but he could not assume a sympathetic and serious tone. He was possessed by that perverse spirit which forces a man to garnish his story, however tragic, with quirks and scraps of illustration incongruous and out of taste. He was at heart full of pity for Arminell; he had not gone to Orleigh on

journalistic ends, though not averse to paying his travelling expenses by turning what he had seen into type, but he had gone for the girl's sake, and only learned the death of his brother-in-law on reaching Orleigh. He knew that she hungered for information which she could not receive through the channels formerly open to her. As he spoke to her, his heart swelled, and he had some difficulty in controlling his emotion. Nevertheless, he assumed a tone of half banter, that galled his own sense of propriety as much as it jarred on Arminell. And this masquerade was assumed by him as much to disguise his real self from himself as from the girl. Verily, in our horror of hypocrisy, we are arrant hypocrites. Essayists and satirists have united to wage a crusade against cant, and have succeeded so completely that we dread the semblance of piety, kindness, sweetness, lest they be taken as an assumption only. In the reaction against false appearances of goodness we have run into the opposite extreme, and put on a false appearance of roughness, hardness, and cynicism.

Lest we should be taken to be apricots, with sweet outside and hard interior, we affect to be walnuts, rugged and bitter. A woman poses to herself in the glass, and adorns herself with jewelry to give pleasure first to herself and then to others; but men cock their hats, smut their noses, make grimaces in the glass, and having sneered at their own buffoon appearance, pass off the same pranks on their acquaintance. They will neither allow to themselves nor to others that they acknowledge a serious interest in the drama of life, that they have respect for what is noble, pity for what is suffering, reverence for what is holy. They affect to cast burlesque into all relations of life, as salt is put into all dishes, to make them palatable.

Arminell was not deceived by the manner of James Welsh; under the affectation of selfishness and callousness she recognised the presence of generous sympathy, just as she had seen the same quality under the chatter and pretence of the wife.

At the beginning of this story we saw

Arminell present at what we called the grand transformation scene in the pantomime of life ; now she had reached another, and that a more startling, thorough-going transformation scene. She saw the world and the performers therein differently from the way in which she had seen them before, the world in a real light, the performers in undress. She had got behind the scenes, and into the green-room. Delusion was no longer possible ; she saw the framework of the scenery, the contrivances for the production of effects, and the actors oiling their faces with cotton-wool to remove the paint.

In former times there existed in England a profession which has become extinct—the profession of dowsing. A dowser was a man who laid claim to the peculiar gift of discernment of metal and of water. He was employed to discover mines and springs. He took in his hands a forked hazel rod, holding in each hand one of the branches. When he walked over a hidden vein of metal, or a subterranean artery of water, the rod revolved in his hands, and pointed downwards, and

wherever it pointed, there he ordered the sinking of a shaft or well.

But, although dowsing after minerals and fountains has ceased to be practised, we still have among us moral dowsers, and it is even possible for us to become adepts at dowsing ourselves.

The old dowsers insisted that their profession was not an art but an inherent faculty. The dowser was born, not made. But in moral dowsing this is not the case. The faculty can most certainly be acquired, but only on one condition, that we begin with dowsing our own selves. *Fiat experimentum in corpore vili.* Unconsciously Arminell had been invested with this power; it had come on her at once, on that morning when her folly, her error, had been revealed to her consciousness. From that memorable moment, when she came to know herself as she really was, not as she had fancied herself to be, the manner in which she viewed other natures with which she was brought in contact was radically changed. She found herself no longer as heretofore occupied with the outer

surface, its ups and downs, its fertility or its barrenness ; the invisible rod turned in her hands and revealed to her the hidden veins of ore and motive currents. She saw the silver thread deep below the most unpromising surface, the limpid spring under the most rugged exterior.

As she overlooked the superficial flaws in Mr. and Mrs. Welsh because she recognised their substantial goodness, so did she begin now to perceive what had before been unnoticed in the characters of her father and step-mother. She had had eyes previously only for their foibles and infirmities, now she saw how full of sterling qualities both had been, of punctual fulfilment of duties, of conscientious discharge of the obligations imposed on them by their position and wealth, of hearty good-will for all with whom they were brought in contact. She had disregarded her little half-brother, the present Baron Lamerton, because he was only a child with childish thoughts, childish pursuits, and childish prattle ; and now she saw that his was a very tender, loving spirit, which it

would have been worth her while to cultivate. In the first moment of disappointment, humiliation and anger, she had been incensed against Jingles for having assisted her in perpetrating her great mistake. She saw what a fool he had been, how conceited, how ungrateful, but even over this forbidding soil the divining rod turned, and revealed a vein of noble metal. If it had not been there, he would not have accepted his humiliation with frankness and have shown so decided a moral rebound.

When one who has the dowsing faculty is in the society of those who lack it, and listens to their talk, their disparagement of others, the captiousness with which they pick at trivial blemishes, sneer at infirmities, blame short-comings, that person listens with a sort of wonder at the blindness of the talkers, at their lack of perception, because their eyes never penetrate below the surface, and a sort of pity that they have never turned it inwards and searched themselves, not for silver but for dross.

The knight Huldbrand, when riding

through the Enchanted Wood, had his eyes opened, and beneath the turf and the roots of the trees, he looked through, as it were, a sheet of green glass, and saw the gold and silver veins in the earth, and the spirits that worked at, and directed their courses, opening sluices here and stopping currents there. So it is with those invested with the dowsing gift—with them in the Enchanted Wood of Life.

In the twilight room Arminell listened to Mr. Welsh's story of the funeral of her father, with tears running down her cheeks, regardless of the manner in which the story was told, in the intensity of her interest in the matter, and conscious of the intention of the narrator.

The death of Lord Lamerton had indeed evoked an amount of feeling and regret that showed how deeply-rooted was the estimation in which his good qualities were held, and how unreal was the agitation that had been provoked against him.

The county papers of all political complexions gave laudatory notices of the late

nobleman. Every one who had come within range of his influence had good words to say of him, and lamented his loss as that of a relative. Selfish interest undoubtedly mixed with the general regret. The sportsmen feared that the subscription to the foxhounds would not be maintained on the same liberal scale ; the parsons, that on the occurrence of a vacancy in the Lamerton patronage, their claims would be overlooked by the trustees ; the medical men regretted that the death had been too sudden to advantage them professionally ; the benevolent societies feared that the park would not be thrown open to them with the same liberality ; the young ladies that there would be no ball at Orleigh next winter ; the toppers that they would not taste again the contents of a famous cellar ; the tradesmen that money would not be spent in the little country town ; the artisans that work would be abandoned and hands discharged. Of course there was self-interest in the minds of those who lamented the loss of Lord Lamerton, regret was not unmingled with selfish feeling ; but, then, what motives,

what emotions are unmixed? The coin of the realm is not pure, it consists of metal and alloy; and the feelings that pass current among men are not less adulterated. But are they the less estimable on that account? Would they pass if unmixed? Would they be as poignant if pure? Why, the very prayers in which we address Heaven have their stiffening of self-concern, and it is this that gives them their force. Are they less acceptable on that account?

Popular feeling was doubly stirred and sympathy for the family greatly deepened by the news of the almost simultaneous death of Miss Arminell Inglett. The notice of her death had appeared first in the *Times*, and then in all the papers; but the circumstances were only imperfectly known. It was rumoured that the shock of the news of her father's death had affected her fatally—her heart having always been weak—whilst in London staying with her aunt. Such an account had appeared in one of the society papers, and perhaps Mr. Welsh could give the best explanation of how it came there.

This was reported at Orleigh. Others said she had died at the second family place in Northamptonshire ; all agreed that she had been buried there beside her mother. Strange rumours had circulated about Miss Inglett, but they had been traced to Mrs. Cribbage, and every one knew that the tongue of that lady, like that of an ox, must be taken with salt. Consequently the rumours died away, and were wholly discredited.

And it was true that Arminell Inglett was dead. That is to say, the old self-opinionated, supercilious, self-willed Arminell was no more.

In spring the new buds are sheathed in hard husks. One warm morning after a shower they thrust aside these horny sheaths, and the tender foliage appears. It was so with Arminell. She had hitherto worn her better part, the generous qualities of her soul, in a hard and ungracious shell ; now this shell had fallen off, and they broke forth, ready to expand and clothe her with a new and unexpected beauty.

CHAPTER XLIV.

FRAMING.

MR. JAMES WELSH did all that was requisite for the arrangement of Arminell's money-matters. She was entitled to her mother's dower, sufficient to maintain her in easy circumstances. The settlement of her affairs with the trustees, guardians, and the solicitors of the family was a delicate transaction ; Arminell authorised Welsh to act for her, and he managed with adroitness and tact, without grudging time or trouble. Meanwhile she remained an inmate of his villa in the Avenue, Shepherd's Bush. She did not wish to be hasty in securing a house for herself and engaging a companion. She would not, however, encroach on the hospitality of the Welshes, and she insisted on becoming their lodger, paying them a moderate weekly sum for her board. They were not rich, their circumstances somewhat strait ; it was

an object with Mrs. Welsh to save the penny on the 'bus by walking to the railway arch ; and though, in their exuberant hospitality, they would have cheerfully kept her as their guest, and treated her to the best they could afford, she insisted on their accepting her on her own terms, not on theirs.

Only by degrees did she realise to the full extent what her social suicide implied. It was not possible for her to estimate its costs till she had committed the irrevocable act which severed her from the world to which she had belonged ; as impossible, or almost as impossible as it is for the girl who jumps off London Bridge to conceive of the altered relations and strangeness of the region into which she will pass through the mud and water of the Thames.

I know that nothing surprised me more as a child than being told that water was composed of an infinite number of globules arranged like pebbles in a bag ; but the stream of social life, which looks equally simple and elemental, is in reality made not only of the little component globules of

individual life, but of a thousand other circles enclosing these globules, all distinct, self-contained, and rotating on their own axes and taking their own courses. Each of these circles has its special interests, its special tittle-tattle, its special spites, and its special ambitions. There are circles of all sorts, professional, and social, and intellectual, and those who pass from one to another have to undergo mental adjustment before they can understand the language and partake in the momentum of these spheres. Such is the parsonic circle, such the sporting circle, such the circle of politicians, such the legal circle. Let a hunter pitch his rider in pink over a hedge into a ditchful of picnicing clergy and their wives and daughters, and he will be as unable to talk with them as they to entertain him. Let Mrs. Brown drop through the ceiling into an officers' mess, and she will not have a thought, a taste, a word in common. Suffer an archbishop to rise through a trap into the green-room of the ballet girls, and what would they have in common? The gods live on Olympus, mortals on the

plain, and the demons in Tartarus, and all roll on together in one current. Dante divides heaven into constellations, and purgatory into mansions—all the blessed are separated by leagues of ether, and all the lost by adamantine walls. They do not associate, the former enjoy themselves by themselves in their cold planets and groups of stars, and the latter stop in their several torments by themselves. Their several virtues and several vices classify them and separate them from their fellows. It is not otherwise in this world. We are all boxed off from each other, and very uncomfortable when we step out of our proper box into another.

Arminell felt keenly the solitude of her condition, and it weighed on her spirits. It was not possible for her at once to accommodate herself to her new surroundings. She had Mrs. Welsh to talk, or rather to listen to, but Mrs. Welsh had no other subjects of conversation than the iniquities of servants and the scandals in high life. According to Mrs. Welsh, there was but one social circle in which reigned virtue, and that was the circle

of the middle class to which she belonged. Servants as beneath that were bad, that her daily experience taught her, and the upper ten thousand, as she knew by the voice of gossip and the revelations of the press, were also corrupt. It is conceivable that one may tire of hearing only two subjects discussed, even though these subjects be of engrossing interest ; and Arminell was fatigued with the relation of the misdeeds of domestics, and the disorders of the nobility. Shylock said to Antonio that he would talk with him, buy with him, sell with him, but would not eat with him. Arminell could do everything with Mrs. Welsh except think with her. The girl felt her friendless condition. She had no companion of her own age, class, and sex, to whom she could open her mind and of whom ask counsel. She could have no more communication with those in the upper world to which she had belonged, and which shared her intellectual and moral culture, than can a fish have communication with the bird. It looks up and sees the beautiful creatures skimming the surface of its element, sees

their feet moving in it, their beaks dipped below it, but the birds do not belong to the aqueous element, nor the fish to the atmosphere, and they must live apart accordingly. The bird can pull out a fish and gobble it, and the fish can bite the toes of the swimming duck, and that is the limit of their association.

I have heard of the case of a lady who was either struck by lightning or so paralyzed by electricity that she lay as one dead, bereft of power of motion. She neither breathed nor did her pulse beat, she could not move a muscle or articulate a sound. She was pronounced to be dead, and was measured, shrouded, and put into her coffin. But though apparently dead, she could hear all that went on in the room, the blinds being drawn down, the number of feet and inches determined for her shell, the sobbing of her mother, and the tramp of those who brought in her coffin. She heard the undertaker ask her father on the day of the funeral, whether he should at once screw her down—then, by a supreme effort she succeeded in flickering

an eyelid, and her father saw the movement and sent for a surgeon.

Arminell was dead—dead to her relations, to her friends, and to her acquaintance. They discussed her, and she was unable to defend herself. They wept over her, and she could not dry their tears. She was incapacitated by her own act from giving a token of life. She was separated from every one with whom for eighteen years she had associated, cut off from every interest which for all these years had occupied her mind, severed from that stream of intellectual life in which she had moved.

She would not quiver an eye in entreaty to be taken out of her shell, she had deliberately gone into that chest, and to it she must henceforth contract her interests and accommodate her habits. When we die we carry away nothing with us of our treasure, but we have our friends and relatives to associate with in the world of spirits; Arminell, by her social death, had carried away with her her patrimony, but that was all. She must make new acquaintances, and acquire fresh friends.

If there be any truth in the doctrine of the transmigration of spirits, then the souls after death enter into new existences, as dogs, oxen, elephants, cockatoos, or earth-worms. If so—the dog that fawns on us with such speaking eyes may be the wife we still lament; and when we cut a worm in two with our spade, we may be slicing in half our little lost babe; and the beef of the ox served at our table may have been worn by the wandering spirit of our most intimate friend.

There are two considerations which make me most reluctant to accept the doctrine of transmigration—the one is that when we leave our human frames and enter into those of dog or slug, what wretchedness it will be for us to adapt our minds and feelings to doggish or sluggish limits. And the other is that the distress must be insupportable to associate with those with whom we have lived without the power of communicating with them.

Now Arminell had transmigrated from the aristocratic order of beings into the middle class order of beings, and she had to

accommodate her mind to the ways of this lower grade; and although sitting on a bench in Hyde Park, she might see those she had known, talked to, loved, pass in Rotten Row, she could no more communicate with them than can those who have migrated into dog, and cockatoo, and slug, communicate with us.

In course of time, no doubt, she would find congenial spirits, get to know and love nice girls in this new circle in which she found herself, but that would take time, In course of time, no doubt, she would find her place in this new order of life, be caught by its drift, and drive forward with it. When we are in a railway carriage and cast something from the window, that object is carried on by the momentum of the train, and does not drop perpendicularly to the ground. So Arminell in falling from her class was still for a while sensible of its impulses, but this would cease in time.

There are cases known to science, in which a person has fallen into a condition of mental blank, has forgotten everything acquired, and all acquaintances, and has to be-

gin from the beginning again, to learn to know the relations and to acquire speech and every accomplishment. Now such a case was not that of Arminell, for she remembered all her past, nevertheless she had in this new condition to accept as lost a vast amount of what she had acquired in eighteen years, and begin to accumulate afresh.

Now—she was solitary. It had not occurred to her in her former life that solitude could be oppressive. Then she had counted it as an escape from the whirl of social intercourse. Then she had resented advice, and undervalued sympathy; but now, when she was deprived of these things, she felt the loss of them. The wife transmigrated into a dog may snap and bark, but cannot otherwise express her heartache, and reproach her husband when preparing for his second wife; nor can the worm plead and look at us out of our child's blue eyes and tell us it is our own little one translated, when we lift the spade over it. So must Arminell remain silent and unrecognised before all those who had loved her and known her in her first existence.

The life she led in the Avenue, Shepherd's Bush, was so unlike what she had been accustomed to that it was not possible for her to fit herself to it all at once. But Arminell had good sense, and a brave spirit. She did not waste her energies on vain repining. She did not recoil from and disparage that life into which she had entered. She accepted it, as she had accepted the revelation of her folly.

There is a serviceable Yorkshire word, descriptive of accommodation to circumstances, which is worthy of being rescued from a provincialism and of elevation into general acceptance, and that word is—to frame.

A raw country girl is taken into a household as servant. If she shows token of adaptability to the situation, teachableness, and willingness, she is said to frame.

A clerk settles into an office, is quick in acquiring the technicalities of the business, is interested in his work, obliging as to extension of hours under pressure, and he is said by his employers to frame.

A newly-married couple, if they make allowances for each other's weaknesses, are not self-willed and unyielding, if ready to make the best of all circumstances, are said also to frame.

The frame is the situation, and it may be of all kinds, plain or rich, narrow or wide ; it may be guilt and burnished, or of rude cross-pieces of oak. Into this frame the new life, like a picture, has to be fitted, so much of margin has to be shorn off, or so much of mount has to be added. The frame will not accommodate itself to the picture, the picture must be adapted to the frame.

Arminell was in the process of framing, and the frame was one of her own selection. Whether suitable or not, the situation could not be adapted to her, she must adapt herself to it ; she must cut away here, and piece on there to fit it. The reader shall be shown some instances of the way in which Arminell progressed with her framing.

In the first place, the girl had been accustomed all her life to having a lady's-maid in attendance on her, and putting to rights

everything she left in disorder. When she changed her dress, she had been accustomed to throw her clothes about just where she had taken them off; she had not put her gloves away, tidied her dressing-table, arranged her dresses in the drawers. When, at first, she came to the Avenue, she did as she had been wont, and was unable to understand the hints thrown out by her hostess that the maid had too much of household work to do to be able to act as a lady's-maid as well. Then Arminell discovered that it engaged Mrs. Welsh half-an-hour in the morning, another half-hour in the afternoon, and a third in the evening, to arrange her clothes and room. And as she was aware that Mrs. Welsh had no cook, and had to superintend the cooking herself, this imposed on her hostess an extra and arduous task. Mrs. Welsh expected before long to be a mother, and to accumulate work on the good woman at such a time was unjustifiable.

Accordingly Arminell began to put her room to rights herself, learned how to fold her gowns, and liked to arrange her boots

tidily under the dressing-table, and put her towels straight on the horse, and the comb on the brush. After a week she found that the trouble she gave herself was very slight, and that it afforded her real pleasure to be her own lady's-maid.

That was one item in the framing.

Mrs. Welsh had not much plate. Arminell was not particular about what she ate, but she was accustomed to silver and glass, kept very bright, and to unchipped and pretty china. The plate of the Welsh establishment was electro-plate, and the plating was somewhat abraded. The forks and spoons were scratched, not polished. If an egg had been eaten at breakfast, it was not impossible to identify at dinner the spoon that had been used for the egg. Even Castle E claret was not attractive when the bowl of the wine-glass bore on it the impress of a thumb.

One day Arminell said to Mrs. Welsh, "I am sure that the girl is overworked. Shall I give a final burnish to the silver and glass before they come on table?" And Mrs.

Welsh had joyfully assented. So Arminell began to take a pride and find a pleasure in being butler in the house of Welsh.

That was another item in the framing.

One day Mrs. Welsh threw out mysterious hints about the anticipated addition to the family, and lamented that, owing to her being without a cook, she had been unable to provide the many articles of clothing which a new-comer into the world expects and exacts, to wit :—six long night-dresses, half-a-dozen flannels, six shirts, the same number of little socks, bibs to the number of one dozen, besides other articles which for brevity we will include under an &c. What would little Welsh do without his trousseau?

Then Arminell went out and bought linen and flannel, and horrocks, and began to cut out and sew, and mark, and then hold up the little garments and laugh and dance round them, and find a pleasure and pride in being a sempstress.

That was another item in the framing.

In a couple of weeks, Mrs. Welsh was unable to further superintend the cooking,

The heat of the kitchen made her faint, and the girl, when left to her own devices, devised startling effects, quite Wagnerian, Doréish.

Then Arminell began diligently to study "Mrs. Warne's Cookery Book," and descend to the subareal world and direct the proportions of condiments, the rolling of pastry, the mincing of veal, and the stuffing of geese. Mrs. Welsh had had a limited culinary horizon—beef olives, rissoles, haricot, were the changes on joint, and the puddings were ground rice mould, "shape" Mrs. Welsh called it, rice milk and apple-tart. Arminell extended the range, and was pleased to surprise and delight Mr. Welsh, when he returned fagged in the evening, with a dinner that was a pleasure to eat. In a word, she found a gratification and pride in being cook.

That was another item in the framing.

Later, a little Welsh appeared on the scene, and the monthly nurse appeared simultaneously. It really seemed as if Mrs. Welsh had been brought to bed of two babies,

for the nurse was as helpless as the infant. She could, or would, neither dust the patient's room, nor lay a fire, nor put a match to the fire when laid for her. She was incapable of carrying upstairs a cup of tea or bowl of gruel. It was hard to say which of the two babies was the most incapable, exacting, fractious, and insatiable. The maid-of-all-work lost what little head she had, and her temper went along with her head. When, finally, it became clear that the corpulent, middle-aged baby drank something stronger than milk, Arminell asked to have her dismissed, and undertook to attend to Mrs. Welsh and the baby for the remaining fortnight.

Thus Arminell fell into the position of a nurse.

'That was another item in the framing.

But there were other adjustments went to the framing. Arminell's superciliousness, her pride of intellect, her self-will, required much paring down. Formerly she had treated what was common-place and humdrum with contempt as beneath the regard of

one gifted with intelligence. Now she began to acknowledge that it was in the fulfilment of humdrum duties, and in the accomplishment of common-place obligations that the dignity and heroism of life lay.

Arminell had been accustomed to criticise severely those with whom she associated, and to laugh at their weaknesses : and now she had learned her own weakness, the disposition to laugh at others had departed from her, and was replaced by great forbearance.

She began to wonder whether the regeneration of society was to be effected by revolutionary methods, and was not best accomplished by the slow processes of leavening with human charity.

How often had she supposed that happiness was impossible apart from the amenities of life, that in the middle class, with its imperfect culture and narrow aims, there could be no true felicity ; that in the lowest classes, where there was no refinement of taste, no polish of mind, no discipline of intellect, life must be insupportable in its wretchedness.

But now she saw that happiness was of general distribution and was not to be arrogated as a prerogative of one class alone, that, indeed, it seemed to lose its freshness, its gaiety in proportion as knowledge increased and culture advanced. The two Welshes were happy ; James happy in his work of furious onslaught against aristocracy, Tryphœna happy in the little sphere of household duties, and supremely happy in giving food to her baby. Not only so, but the slave, the maid-of-all-work, was happy down the area, and sang over her drudgery.

Then Arminell recalled the game she had played as a child with her companions in a circle, holding a string with a gold ring threaded on it. One child stood in the centre and tried to discover who had the ring, and the ring passed about the living hoop, and there was no hand under which the ring might not be found. It was the same with the round game of life. The gold ring of happiness was not retained by those in gay clothing, nor to be found only under the taper fingers and in the delicate palms, as often it

slipped under the broad flat hands of those in washing calico gowns, and quite as often was retained by the laughing rogues in rags, whose rough hands were begrimed with dirt.

Consequently Arminell's ideas on this point, as on many another, underwent radical change. This also went towards the framing. Arminell's manner changed. Her impatience was replaced by gentleness and consideration for others. Instead of her thoughts radiating from and reverting to self, they played about others, to the forgetfulness of self.

An underlying sadness never deserted her, but never intruded on notice. She constrained herself to be cheerful, and its presence was only revealed by great sweetness of disposition. She took interest in what interested others, and did not force on others interest in her own concerns.

There are frames ready-made for all of us. It falls to the lot of an exceptional few to have frames made to fit them. Some of us make frames for ourselves, and as we always over-estimate our size such frames are never

suitable. As we cannot expand or contract our frames to our liking, we must do the other thing, stretch and shape our pictures to them. I have seen coloured sketches on an elastic material capable of being extended indefinitely. Well for us if our life's picture be painted on such accommodating material.

CHAPTER XLV.

FAREWELL.

THE house at Chillacot had been temporarily repaired, and made habitable, so that Jingles and his mother could occupy it; but the young man shortly after the death of his reputed father entered into negotiations with the railway company for the sale of the place. His mother was shaken by what had occurred. She had been threatened with paralysis, and her speech affected for a few days; but she speedily recovered activity of tongue. There was now nothing in Orleigh to retain the Saltrens. The mother had never liked the dismal house, it was not grand enough to meet her ideas, for was she not the sister of a gentleman of the press, a man who was certain, according to her account, to contest that division of the county in the Radical interest at the next election? She resolved to settle in London. There

she would be able to assume more consequence than where she and her antecedents were well known. But Mrs. Saltren laid down to her son that it was not to any part of London she would go. She must have a house in the West End—her brother, she said, lived in the West End. There was no qualifying S. before or C. after the W. on his address. Those persons who lived in S. W., or W. C. *might* be gentlemen, those who lived in division W. *were* gentlemen. As certain estates in Austria ennoble their purchasers, so did living in the W. quarter of town elevate socially. At Orleigh Mrs. Saltren could not aspire to occupy such a position as that which her fancy pictured herself as adorning in town. There she could figure as the widow of a captain ; at Orleigh it was known too well that the captaincy of her husband had been over a gang of miners.

The sale of Chillacot would enable her to spend more money than was usually at her command, and she talked grandly of having a carriage and a button-boy. At Orleigh she could not speak as freely of her acquaintance

with the Lamerton family as she could elsewhere, for at Orleigh it was known that her situation at the Park had been a menial one. The railway company paid liberally for Chillacot, but not so liberally as Mrs. Saltren figured to herself, nor was the capital thus acquired likely to cover all the expenditure which she flattered herself she would be able to launch forth into.

Marianne Saltren had exercised sufficient discretion to hold her tongue about her husband's concern in the death of Lord Lamerton, but she was sufficiently aware of her own frailty to doubt whether she could retain the secret for ever among confidential friends, and she knew that to trust an intimate friend with a secret was the way to publish it to the world. Anxiety lest she should be betrayed into communicating what had better remain unknown acted strongly upon her to make her desire to leave Orleigh speedily.

The young man, moreover, had no wish to stay in a place which was associated in his mind with too many painful and humiliating recollections. It would not be possible for

him there to escape meeting Lady Lamerton and little Giles, and such encounters must be productive of distress to her ladyship and embarrassment to himself.

At Orleigh moreover, there were no means of his earning for himself a livelihood. His mother was welcome, in his eyes, to spend the money derived from the sale, money to which he had, he felt, a legal but no moral right. The captain was not his father, therefore he did not consider himself entitled to what he left.

The desire to make his way in literature had deserted him under the rebuff received from Mr. Welsh, and his self-confidence had not recovered the blow it had been given to make him feel himself qualified to act as political teacher of men.

He resolved on taking a clerkship in an office. His pride was gone. So long as he could earn enough to support himself and his mother, he did not care in what sort of business he made the money, so long as it was fairly and honourably earned.

As the day approached on which it was

arranged that he and his mother should leave Chillacot, Saltren's heart sank ; but not so that of his mother. She became more talkative and more boastful. Only since he had discovered how false she had been in the story of his parentage, had his eyes been open to her unreliability. Hitherto he had looked up to her with respect. He had never felt much tenderness towards old Saltren, and his mother by her complaints had bred in him antagonism towards his father as if he were a man who misunderstood his mother and failed to show her the love and regard she deserved. There are heads like those of thistles, that are full of feather-light, mischievous thoughts, which are blown about the country and in proper soil germinate and produce a crop of weeds. Such was the head of Marianne Saltren, but Jingles was sufficiently humbled to acknowledge that unless his own heart had proved suitable soil, rich in self-conceit, these thistle-down fancies would not have rooted.

Mrs. Saltren's acquaintances called to say farewell, and before them her boasting was

so ridiculous that it covered her son with shame. He knew what the circumstances of James Welsh were, and what the position was that he occupied in town.

Young Saltren hesitated for some days how to act towards Lady Lamerton. Should he call and bid her farewell, or should he forbear? To both a meeting must be painful. If he considered his natural shrinking from an unpleasant scene, he would desist from paying her his respects; but his conscience told him that to depart without an apology and a word of explanation would be ungenerous. Accordingly, on his last day at Chillacot, he walked over to the Park, and asked to see her ladyship. Lady Lamerton was engaged at the moment with some ladies who had called to pay their condolence, so at his request he was shown into the library; and the butler undertook to inform her ladyship that he was there, as soon as she was free from her visitors.

As he sat in the familiar room, he mused on what he had to say. The situation was peculiar, as it was difficult. Lady Lamerton

knew nothing, he supposed, and need know nothing, about the mistake he had made concerning his parentage. He could not tell her the story which he and Arminell had believed, and on which they had acted, yet without this key to their conduct it was hardly possible to explain it—to justify it even with the key was impossible.

As Jingles sat in the study meditating, the door opened slightly, and little Giles's face appeared at it. The moment he saw his old tutor he uttered an exclamation of delight, and ran to him. "Mr. Saltren, why have you left me?" he asked: "my dear papa is dead, and I am so unhappy. Why do you not come back to us? and Arminell is dead also. I have no one here but mamma. I love mamma, but I want you also."

Jingles took the little boy on his knee. The child had a delicate, intelligent face.

"Did you hear that I had arrived?" asked Saltren.

"No; I looked into the library because—I really can hardly say why. Since I have lost papa, I go all about the house; I know

I cannot find him, but I cannot help running into one room and then another seeking him. I heard the study door open, and that was papa's room, and I thought—that is—I didn't think—I wondered who could be in papa's room. I was fond of coming here and sitting on his lap and hearing about his rides and his spills when foxhunting. Whenever I hear a door open or a step on the stairs, I think papa is coming, and then next moment I know it cannot be so. Why do you not come back? I am doing no lessons now, and am tired of holiday."

"You are going to school shortly, Giles."

"Yes, I know, but not till the term begins. Nurse says that I am my lord now, and that mamma will call me Lamerton instead of Giles. But I don't like it. I don't wish to take anything that was papa's. I always persuade myself he will come back. Did they tell you that I saw a black coach come to the door and carry away papa? The black coach never came for Arminell. When I saw that, papa would not let me tell

mamma lest it should frighten her. Why was not Arminell buried in the vault?"

"Have you had any of your bad dreams lately?"

"No, sir, but two nights ago I thought that papa came to my crib side and kissed me. I did not see, but I felt him; and he put his hand on my head and stroked my hair, exactly the same way he did that night when I had my bad dreams and saw the black coach and screamed. I know papa's kiss even when I do not hear him speak, and also the touch of his hand, which is not heavy, but very light. I told nurse about it in the night, after he was gone, but she said it was all stuff and nonsense, and I must go to sleep. There comes mamma."

The boy jumped off his tutor's knee and stood aside. He had been brought up to old-fashioned courtesy, and never remained seated when his mother entered the room.

Lady Lamerton bowed stiffly to Jingles. She was dressed in the deepest mourning, and looked pale and delicate. At a sign from her the little fellow withdrew. She in-

dicated a chair, but Saltren, who had risen, did not reseate himself. She did not speak, but waited for what he had to say, and she remained standing.

“My lady,” said the young man, “my conscience would not suffer me to depart, probably never again to revisit Orleigh, without coming here to express to you in few words what I feel in every fibre of my heart. I know how much I owe you, my lady,—to your forbearance and kindness towards a”—he hesitated a moment, and then said the word firmly—“towards a Prig. I have not the words at my command in which even to allude to the debt I owe to one who——”

She bowed her head, she understood to whom he referred. His voice refused to proceed with the sentence.

“I have come, my lady, in the first place to tell you that never, while life lasts, will I forget what I owe to you and to his lordship.”

“It is a pity”—she began, and then checked herself; but a faint colour came into her lips, a flush of anger at the recollection

of how he had repaid the kindness shown him.

Jingles waited for her to finish the sentence, but as she did not do so, he said, "It is a pity I did not remember this earlier. Yes, that I now admit, to my indelible shame. I acted most ungratefully. I do not know, my lady, what Miss Inglett has told you, and therefore I am placed in a difficulty."

"She has told me everything," answered Lady Lamerton, "at least so I suppose. Here is her letter to me, which you are at liberty to peruse, and you will see by it if there is anything kept back which ought to be told, or which you wish to tell me."

She extended a note to him, and he took it, and ran his eye through it. It was written in Arminell's firm hand, and it told everything, in her plain, decisive, and direct manner—she hid nothing, she excused nothing.

He returned the letter to Lady Lamerton.

"There is but one thing for me to add—or rather," said he, "one correction for me to make. Miss Inglett takes the blame on herself. It should rest mainly on my shoul-

ders. Without my offer of help she never would have left this house. I have no word of self-excuse. No one can reproach me more severely than I reproach myself. In no eyes can I figure more despicably than in my own. That is all I have to say—to assure you of my gratitude and my regret. I thank you, Lady Lamerton, that you have permitted me to see you and say this.”

“Mr. Saltren,” said she, “I will not disguise the fact that you—you and my step-daughter between you—have occasioned me more grief than has even the death of my dear lord. But I am not justified in refusing to accept your expression of sorrow, though perhaps it is too early yet, and the wound too fresh, for me to be able heartily to forgive you both. I acknowledge that you acted for the best when you discovered your error, in returning promptly to Chillacot, so as to silence the voice of scandal. Whether Arminell was wise in acting as she did admits of difference of opinion. For her decision you are not responsible. She tells me what you proposed—to telegraph for her maid to be

sent to Portland Place, and that the maid should find her at her aunt's and accompany her home. If that plan had been executed, only ourselves would have known the secret history of that London escapade. But she elected otherwise. She would punish herself for having thought unworthily of her dear father, and for having embittered his last hour of life. It is possible, indeed it is probable, that it was the distress and alarm which he felt, as he took that fatal walk, that blinded him as to his course, so that he fell over the cliff. I dare say Arminell has judged right in resolving to suffer. I do not blame her. There is something honourable in her resolve to abide the consequences of her own foolish act. She has also spared me the difficulty of meeting her under the circumstances, and controlling and disguising my feelings towards her. If we had met immediately, I hardly know how I could have behaved with composure and charity towards her. I never, never could have loved her as I have loved her heretofore ; for I could not have forgotten the dishonour she had done

in thought to the purest life, the noblest soul ——” Then her ladyship broke down.

After a minute she recovered herself, and proceeded, “She has foreseen this, and has resolved to relieve me of the restraint, to spare me the trial. I thank her for that. I confess, Mr. Saltren, that when I heard you were here my first impulse was to decline an interview. But on second thoughts I resolved to accord you a meeting. It is as well that no one should suspect the wrong you have done; and it is right that I should accept your expression of penitence, for we daily ask of Heaven to forgive us our trespasses as we forgive such as have trespassed against us.” She paused.

Saltren’s heart was too full for him to speak.

Silence ensued for a minute or two. Each stood, each with lowered eyes, and with a struggle raging in each for control over the stirred emotions.

“I will say good-bye,” said her ladyship, “no doubt for ever. After what has passed it is as well that we should never meet again.

I am glad that you have called. I am glad that I have received you. I shall think of you henceforth more kindly, in the light of one who, having done wrong, devotes the rest of his life to striving to do his duty. Mr. Saltren, our feelings must not be allowed to guide us, but principle."

Giles Inglett Saltren walked home much depressed, and yet content that he had seen Lady Lamerton; depressed because he had seen her and Giles for the last time, and content because he had done right in seeking the interview.

He felt now that he had thrown away an opportunity of in some little way repaying Lady Lamerton for the kindness shown him. But for his mistake he might at this time have rendered her valuable aid, such as, in a time of confusion consequent on the fall of the main pillar of a house, must always occur. He might have been of use to her in a thousand little ways, knowing as he did the ramifications of life in the great house; of use also now with the boy in giving vent to his fresh and pliable character.

A remarkable difference is found to exist between the stages of development in the physical and moral natures. The insect passes through three degrees, the larva, the pupa, and imago, the last phase being the noblest, and the middle the most torpid of the three conditions. With man and woman physically it is different. The childhood indeed corresponds to the grub stage, but this is immediately followed by the butterfly condition, and that of cessation of energies and deterioration of beauty follows as the third period. In psychical development, however, man follows the same course as the insect. After the first voracious acquisitive period of growth, comes the pupa condition, when the human conscience, glutted with as much knowledge and experience as it deems sufficient, encases itself in a chrysalis of conceit, and falls asleep in self-sufficiency. Then, after a period of comatosity, comes a shock of awakening life, the breath of a new spirit passes over the earth, the sun smites with provocative ray, and the sleeping soul stretches itself, and suddenly finds its case

too strait for it. Then that horny hide of self-conceit is riven from top to bottom, and falls away, and at length the true, the perfect spiritual character comes forth, flutters its wings for a moment, gains fresh courage and expands them. It is indeed true that some insects never escape out of their chrysalis, and some birds stifle in their shells through lack of force to rive the encasing bound. And it is also true that there are men and women who to the last remain hide-bound in their self-esteem ; and the moral sense, the spiritual force, the power of development becomes extinct in them.

In our gardens the spade occasionally brings up these dead pupæ in their horny coffins ; and we are continually coming across human beings in society, in like manner enchrysalised in conceit, in which they remain eternally encoffined.

It must not be supposed that the transition condition is without its throes and effort. On the contrary, the advance to the better, the perfect life is only possible through effort, and the effort is stimulated by the sense of

oppression, through realisation of the straitness of the shell.

Hard had been the case that enclosed Jingles, but the Giles Inglett Saltren we now see had completely emancipated himself from it.

When he opened the door of Chillacot, his mother said—"Giles, I have secured a servant. I have promised Tamsine Kite a place in my establishment as lady's-maid. She will attend me to town."

"But, mother—"

"My dear, it is settled; and see, here is Captain Tubb."

"Captain Tubb!"

"Yes, he has come to pay me his respects before I leave, and to congratulate me on the disposal of Chillacot for so handsome a sum, and to enquire what I propose doing with the money—and even to suggest a desirable investment for it."

CHAPTER XLVI.

ON FLOWER-POTS.

SALTREN moved with his mother to London, and went with her into lodgings. Mrs. Saltren had insisted on taking Thomasine with her, and incurred accordingly the additional expense of maintaining her where she was not wanted. Thomasine was not likely to be of use till the Saltrens got a house of their own, and Giles did not choose to take one till he had got into a situation and was able to see what his prospects were likely to be. As lady's-maid to Mrs. Saltren, Thomasine was, of course, no good at all, or likely, to employ that serviceable Yorkshire word again, "to frame" as one.

"Whatever you do," said Mrs. Saltren, "mind that we live in the West End. Why don't you go to Shepherd's Bush, near the Welshes? A man of my brother's political and literary position must have hosts of

distinguished acquaintances, and a woman of Tryphœna's accomplishments and beauty must have the *entrée* into the highest circles. If we lived near them we might get good introductions. If we don't get settled to my liking shortly in a fashionable quarter of town, I do not know but that I may return to Orleigh."

"Return to Orleigh!" echoed the son, "why, mother, I thought that your desire had been to leave it. Besides, we have not a house there any more."

"I know we have not," answered his mother, "but what *we* may be without, it is possible that *I* might secure."

"I do not understand," said Jingles.

"I think," said Mrs. Saltren, "that it is proper the money paid by the railway company for Chillacot should be put into the bank in my name and not in yours."

"I have already told you, mother," said Giles, "that I will not touch it myself. I consider it yours, not mine."

"But I have not the disposal of it."

"Indeed, mother, you have ; it is entered

in your name, not in mine, already. I have no account at the bank at all."

"How can you talk nonsense," said Mrs. Saltren; "you have all your savings—quite a fortune—which you got at the Park whilst tutor to young Giles."

"My dear mother, I had not the time to accumulate a fortune. I was tutor there for eighteen months and what I saved was a hundred and twenty-five pounds, and that sum is already disposed of."

"Disposed of! What have you done with it?"

"I have purchased an annuity for some one."

"For whom? for me?"

"No, mother, not for you. You have the purchase money of Chillacot."

"For whom then? I insist on knowing."

"For a man who has been crippled, and is unable to earn his livelihood."

"What nonsense! What absurd fit of heroic charity has come over you? Since you went to town in that strange, hurried fashion at the time of your father's death, you have

been altered from what you were before, as different as canister beef from that which is fresh from the ox."

Giles said nothing in self-defence.

"But I insist on knowing on whom you have thrown this money away."

"I do not wish to tell—on a man who has the nearest of claims on me."

Mrs. Saltren considered, then coloured, looked mortified, and did not prosecute her inquiries. "Well," she said petulantly, "a fool and his money is soon parted. I am very glad I insisted on having the Chillacot purchase money removed from your fingering. Please to ring for my lady's-maid."

"Lady's-maid, mother?"

"For Thomasine. I want to speak to her. You may leave the room. Here we have been in town a week and the Welshes have not called. If we are to be more solitary here than we were at Chillacot, I shall go back to Orleigh. Ring for my lady's-maid."

Mrs. Saltren was, indeed, becoming tired of London. Her opportunities for boasting

were confined to talks with her landlady and her landlady's visitors.

It did her soul good, said the woman of the lodgings, to hear of lords and ladies ; it was as comforting and improving as the words that dropped from the lips of the Reverend Hezekiah Bumpas. She felt it down to her toes.

Mrs. Saltren indulged her in this particular to her heart's content. She knew many persons of distinction. Lady Hermione Woodhead, who lived in Portland Place, had once been her intimate friend, till they differed about Lord Lamerton's marriage. What had made them differ ? It did not become her to speak, but his lordship had set his affections elsewhere, she could not name in what direction, and had been inveigled by the Woodheads into an alliance with their family. It was a mistake, an entanglement managed by designing women.

Lord Lamerton was ill after his engagement, so was another person who must be nameless. When Lady Lamerton died, then his first flame had married—without love,

and in his desperation he married again. Of course after that first estrangement she and Lady Hermione never spoke. She—Marianne Saltren — had passed the Earl of Anstey's family repeatedly without recognition. If her landlady doubted her word, let her accompany her to Hyde Park, and when the Anstey family drove by, she would see that they took no notice of each other. After what had happened it could not be otherwise. But though Mrs. Saltren could talk what nonsense came into her vain head to the lodging-house keeper, she was disappointed that she could not to a larger circle, disappointed at the little notice she attracted in town. It was most strange that the Welshes took no notice of her. She feared that they were going to treat her with coldness and not introduce her to the distinguished circle of acquaintances in which they moved.

I knew a young girl who was given lessons in oil-painting before she had learned how to draw, and a somewhat similar inversion of order went on in the instruction of Thomasine Kite, whom Marianne Saltren

began to train to be a lady's-maid before the girl knew the elements of domestic service, having previously been a farm-maid, feeding pigs and scouring milk-pails.

Thomasine did not take readily to instruction, least of all could she acquire deference towards her mistress ; and Mrs. Saltren was irritated at the freedom with which the girl accosted her, and at the laughter she provoked in Thomasine when she, Marianne, assumed her grand manner. Moreover, she discovered that her landlady had been questioning the girl in private as to the circumstances and former position of her mistress, and Mrs. Saltren was afraid that the revelations in the kitchen might cause some of her stories to be discounted. Fortunately for her, the broad dialect of Thomasine was almost unintelligible to the landlady, and the girl had the cunning of the uneducated, which leads them to evade giving a direct answer to any question put to them.

Giles Inglett Saltren was unaware till he came to town that Arminell was settled in the house of the Welshes. He knew that his

uncle had undertaken to arrange matters of business for her, and to look out for a house and companion for her, but he had refrained from asking questions about her, from motives of delicacy. Indeed, he had scarcely written to Mr. Welsh since his return to Orleigh. He was resolved not again to seek his assistance on his own behalf, but to find a situation for himself. When, however, he came to town, and met his uncle at an office in the city, he learned from him where Arminell was, and at once urged on Mr. Welsh the mischief which would ensue should Mrs. Saltren discover that Miss Inglett was alive and their lodger. Welsh saw that, and undertook to prevent his wife from calling on Mrs. Saltren, and promised to keep his eye open for an opportunity of placing Arminell elsewhere. Marianne Saltren shared the prevailing opinion that Miss Inglett was dead and Giles was specially anxious lest she should discover that this was not the case. If she were to see Arminell, would it be possible to control her tongue? Would she not be eager to publish the fact that the

Honourable Miss Inglett was a guest of her brother and sister-in-law ?

It had been Saltren's intention to keep away from Arminell, but under this alarm he felt it his duty to see her and precipitate her departure from Shepherd's Bush. His mother could not be kept indefinitely away from her brother's house. One word from his mother might frustrate Arminell's intention, upset her plans. From Mrs. Saltren the report would rapidly spread. Mrs. Cribbage had ears like those of the trusty servant on the Winchester escutcheon, and without the trusty servant's padlock on the tongue. If once the truth got wind, to what difficulties would the Lamerton family be put, now that they had accepted and published the death of the girl !

The author of this novel was involved many years ago in an amateur performance of "Macbeth," but the sole part he took in the tragedy was to sit in the midst of the witches' cauldron, and ignite the several coloured fires which were destined to flame, as scale of dragon, tooth of wolf, liver of blaspheming Jew, were cast in. But when,

to Locke's lovely music, the imps and witches danced around the vessel, then it was his function to explode a so-called flower-pot, which is a roaring, spiriting composition of fire-work. Unfortunately, at the first chorus and circular dance, the blazing flower-pot tumbled back upon the author, concealed within the depths of the cauldron, and, to save himself from an *auto-da-fé* end, he enveloped the flower-pot in a rug, and screwed it up tight and sat on it. So the scene ended, and, believing that the fire-work was completely extinguished, he then unfolded the rug. No sooner, however, did the air reach the smothered fire-work, than it bounced, and roared, and blazed with doubled vigour. It threw out sheaths of flame, it shot off Roman candles, it ejected a score of crackers, and filled the entire stage with smoke, and very nearly burnt down the theatre.

Saltren dreaded something of this sort happening now. The fire-work of scandal had, indeed, been muffled up and smothered, when first it began to fizz ; but—who could

tell?—if it got air again, even through a pin-hole, it would burst into furious conflagration and defy all efforts made to suppress it.

The writer of this story takes this occasion of apologising—if apology be necessary—for the introduction, on more than one occasion, of his own adventures, his own opinions, and, if you will it, his own prejudices into the course of his narrative. He will be told that the author should disappear as a personality, just as the actor merges his individuality in that of the character he represents. He must treat himself as a flower-pot and wrap himself up in the *garde-robe* of his *dramatis personæ*. I might, of course, have told that story of the flower-pot in the cauldron as having happened to Jingles at Orleigh, but then I could never have told that story again at a dinner-party, for my guest, next but one, would say, “Ah! that happened to my brother, or to my uncle, or to an intimate friend;” and how can I deny that Jingles did not stand in one of these relations to him?

Montaigne, the essayist, was a sad sinner in the introduction of himself into his prose.

The essay on which he was engaged might be on the history of Virgil, or Julius Cæsar, but there was certain to creep into it more of Montaigne than of either. The younger Scaliger rebuked him for it, and, after having acquainted the world with the ancestry of Montaigne, he adds, "His great fault is this, that he must needs inform you, 'For my part I am a lover of white wines or red wines.' What the Devil signifies it to the public," adds Scaliger, "whether he is a lover of white wines or red wines?" So, but with more delicacy, and without the introduction of that personage whose name has been written with a capital D, the reader may say to the author, What the blank does it signify what you think, what you like, what you did, whether you ever sat in a cauldron, whether you ever had a flower-pot fall on your head, whether you sought to extinguish it by sitting on it?—go on with your story.

But a man's personality—I mean my own—is like that piece of pyrotechnic contrivance, a flower-pot. He wraps it up, he smothers it under fold after fold of fiction;

but, fizz ! fizz ! out it comes at last—here, there, on all sides, and cannot be disguised. There is, to be sure, that subterfuge, the use of the first person plural in place of the first person singular, but is it not more vain-glorious to talk of We, as if we were royalties, instead of plain and modest I ?

When Giles Saltren arrived at the house in the Avenue, Shepherd's Bush, Arminell flushed with pleasure, sprang from her seat, and with outstretched hand started to receive him ; then she checked herself, and said, " I am glad to see you. Oh, Mr. Saltren, I hear nothing of Orleigh, of dear, dear Orleigh ! I have the heartache for news. I want to hear my own tongue wag on the subject nearest my heart, and to listen to tidings about the people I knew there. I am like a departed soul looking back on familiar scenes, and unable to visit them and old friends, and unable to communicate with them. I am Dives, and Orleigh is to me Paradise. You have come thence with a drop of fresh news wherewith to cool my thirsty tongue."

“ I am Lazarus indeed,” said Saltren, “ but out of Paradise. Ask me what you will about Orleigh, and I will answer what I can.”

“ There is one matter that teases me,” she said ; “ I promised a poor fellow, before I left, that he should have employment at a small wage, and I do not suppose he has had what I undertook to give him.”

“ Do you mean Samuel Ceely ? He is provided for.”

“ How so ? ”

“ He has come in, unexpectedly, for a little money, wherewith an annuity has been purchased.”

“ I am glad of that. And—my mother and Giles, have you seen them ? ”

“ Yes, I called to say farewell to both. Lady Lamerton looks worn and sad, and your dear brother is out of spirits ; but this could not be otherwise.”

Arminell's eyes filled, and she went to the window and dried her tears.

“ Miss Inglett,” said the young man, after she had been given time to recover herself, “ I have only ventured to call on you for one

reason, that I might impress on you the necessity of leaving this house. My mother is in town, and she must not be allowed to know or even suspect that you are alive and here."

Arminell did not speak for some time. Presently she said, "Do not let us talk about anything at present but Orleigh. I am parched for news. I daresay there is nothing of tremendous importance to relate, but I care for little details. How was the house looking? Were the trees turning to their autumn tints? The Virginian creeper, was that touched with crimson? How are Mr. and Mrs. Macduff? I could not abide them when I was at Orleigh; I could be thankful now for a sound of their delightful Scotch brogue. What is Giles going to do? dear little boy! I would give a week's sunlight for a kiss from his moist lips—which formerly I objected to. And mamma—has she been to the Sunday School since—since—?"

Then Arminell's tears flowed again.

After another pause, during which the young man looked through the photographic

album on the table, Arminell recovered herself, and said, "Do not suppose for a moment that I regret my decision. My conscience is relieved. I am beginning to acquire fresh interests. I am now making a frock for baby. I am godmother to Mrs. Welsh's child, and have come to be very fond of him. But there—tell me something about Orleigh, and Giles, and my mother—about any person or animal, or shrub or tree there. And, oh! can you obtain for me some photographs of the place? I should cherish them above everything I have. I dream of Orleigh. I think of Orleigh, and—I shall never see dear Orleigh again."

"I will come another day, Miss Inglett, and tell you all that I can, but to-day I must urge on you the vital necessity of at once leaving this house."

"Your aunt can hardly get on without me."

"She managed formerly without you, she must do the same again."

"But there was no baby in the house then. And, besides, the new cook who was to have

come has failed. The last went up a ladder sixty feet high, and it took several constables and a sergeant to get her down."

Arminell laughed through her tears.

'Miss Inglett, consider what the difficulty would be in which her ladyship would be placed should it become known—'

"Mrs. Saltren and her lady's-maid!"

The door was thrown open by the maid-of-all-work, and she ushered into the drawing-room the person of all others—except perhaps Mrs. Cribbage—whom it was desired to keep from the house, and she was followed by Thomasine Kite.

Verily, the flower-pot was not smothered. It was about to fizz and puff again.

CHAPTER XLVII.

EQUILIBRIUM.

THE story is told of a mouse having been hidden under a dish-cover, and a married pair introduced into the dining-room and invited to partake of every dish except that which remained covered. When left to themselves, the woman, contrary to the advice of her husband, raised the cover, and out ran the mouse. Blue Beard forbade Fatima to open one door in his castle, and of course she tried the forbidden key. There was one tree in the midst of Paradise of which our first parents were not allowed to eat, and of course they nibbled at the fruit to discover how it tasted. All these stories point to the truth that nothing can be retained from human inquisitiveness. A secret resembles a mouse more than an apple or a dead wife of Blue Beard, for the mouse escapes when once uncovered and can no more be hidden,

whereas the apple disappears when eaten, and the dead woman is locked up again. A secret when once out is all over the house, and is far too wary to be trapped again.

Who would expect to find a mouse under a dish-cover? So with secrets, they are let loose from the most unlikely places, and many of us know that so well that we devote our energies to, and spend our time in lifting china cups, opening snuff-boxes, removing lids of tea caddies, unsnapping purses, pulling out drawers, boring holes in casks, in the hopes of letting out secrets. We suspect our acquaintance and "visit" their goods, as if we were custom-house officers in search of what is contraband. We know that they have a forbidden secret somewhere, and we search and probe everywhere to discover it.

There are mice everywhere; if we hold our breath and remain still for two minutes we can hear them scratching and squeaking; and there are secrets everywhere, behind the wainscot, under the floor, in the cupboard. Once I knew of a nest of mice in a gentleman's boot, and once in a lady's muff; and

secrets nest and breed in quite as extraordinary places—in a pocket, in a bunch of flowers, in envelopes, under pillows.

Æsop tells of a beautiful cat that was transformed into a woman, but this woman could never forget her feline instinct to run after a mouse. A great many ladies I know have the same feline instinct to spring out of bed, up from their sofas, to make a dart after a secret, if they hear but the slightest footsteps, see but a whisker. I do not blame them. Men are sportsmen, why should not women be mousers? We find pleasure in starting a hare, why should not a woman find as much in starting a couching secret?

I do not blame them for their love of sport, but for what they do with their game when it is caught. We bag ours, they let theirs run. Samson did the same. He caught foxes and tied firebrands to their tails and sent them into the standing corn of the Philistines. Our secret-hunters, when they have caught their game, tie brimstone matches to their tails and send them among the stores of their neighbours.

I do not believe in the possibility of concealing secrets, and therefore never try to keep them. As for pursuing a secret when once out, that is labour in vain, it changes form, it doubles, it dives, it has as many artifices as a chased fox. As soon recover a secret as recondense volatile essential oils that have been spilt. A secret is not safe in our own heads, for our heads are of amber, and the secret is visible to every one who looks at us, like a congealed fly therein.

In one of the Arabian Nights' Tales a princess goes after a necromancer who has transformed himself into a scorpion, and she takes the shape of a serpent; the wizard, hard pressed, becomes a cat, and the princess attacks him in the disguise of a wolf. Then the cat becomes a seed, and the wolf a cock, thereat the seed falls into a canal and is transmuted into a trout, which is at once chased by the princess in shape of a pike. Finally both issue in flames from the water, the wizard is reduced to ashes, but so also is the princess. If we try to overtake and make an end of a secret, we shall meet with

less success than did this princess. She at last succeeded in destroying her game, but we, in our efforts to catch and make an end of an unpleasant secret, get set on flames ourselves. If we have anything we do not want our neighbours to know, and it has got out, we had better let it run ; we cannot recover it. Indeed I believe that the best way to conceal what we do not want to have known is to expose it for sale, to dangle it before the eyes of every one, like those men outside the Exchange who offer spiders at the end of threads of elastic for one penny. Nobody buys. No one even looks at them. But were one of these fellows to hide such a black putty spider in his hat, up his arm, in his pocket, a crowd would collect and pull him to pieces to find the spider.

It was not immediately that Arminell realised the serious consequences of Mrs. Saltren's visit, but the young man knew at once that all chance of the secret being respected was at an end.

"I am interrupting," said the widow, knowingly, "I am sure I hadn't the wish. I

came to see Mrs. Welsh, and never expected to find my son here, much less Miss Inglett."

"Mrs. Welsh is upstairs with the baby," said Arminell. "You have not seen your nephew. Shall I fetch him, Mrs. Saltren?"

"Not for the world, Miss Inglett. I will run upstairs and find my sister-in-law, who, I do say, has been negligent in calling on me. But if the mountain won't go to Mahomet, Mahomet must go to the mountain. I'm sure I don't want to intrude here. You may leave the room, Thomasine, I don't want you to follow me up to the nursery. Go down to the kitchen. Every one ought to know her own place."

When the girl had disappeared, Mrs. Saltren said confidentially, "We brought the young person to town, and she don't understand how to friz the hair, and me wanting to wear a fringe. However she could have had the face to offer for my situation as lady's-maid, passes my understanding. But, Miss, the conceit of the rising generation is surprising. I want to ask Mrs. Welsh to take the creature off my hands in any capacity she

likes to name. She might do as parlour-maid, or nurse-girl, or cook, anything but lady's-maid. I've tried to teach her to fold gowns, but folding is like music or painting—you must be born with the gift ; it cannot be learnt ; and as some have no ear for tune, and others no eye for colour, so have some no natural gift for folding. You can't make, as they say, a fichu out of a bustle. I had once a red flannel coverlet, and a hole was burnt in it, so I turned it into a petticoat. When the hot weather came I couldn't bear it, and as the Band of Hope wanted a banner, I did a non-alcoholic motto on it in straw letters, and converted it into a Temperance banner, and very inspiriting it was. It is the same with girls. Some you can adapt to all sorts of purposes, others you can't."

When Mrs. Saltren had left the room in quest of her sister-in-law and the baby, Giles said in a tone of discouragement, "I do not know what is to be done. It is inevitable that the news of your being here should reach Orleigh, either through my mother or the girl, probably through both, not perhaps at

once, but eventually. Then—what a difficult position Lady Lamerton will be in!”

Arminell looked down on the carpet, and traced the pattern with her foot. Presently she looked up and said, “I see—I never did justice to the merits of humdrum. Even when I was shown my folly and acknowledged my fault, I must needs still play the heroine, and take a bold step, not altogether justifiable, because it landed me in falsehood, and involved others in untruth. But I thought then it was the simplest course for me to follow to escape having to equivocate and even lie. The straight course is always the best. Now I admit that. Short cuts do not always lead where one thinks they will. I wish I had acted with less precipitation and more modesty, had listened to your advice and acted without dissimulation. For myself now I do not care, but I do not see how my mother and other relations can extricate themselves from the dilemma in which I have placed them.”

“Nor do I.”

“I am neither dead nor alive. The situation

is almost grotesque. I wish it were not distressing. Do not misunderstand me. It is painful to myself only, as every sharp lesson cuts. But I am more vexed for the sake of others than for my own. I have been a fool, an utter fool."

She put her hands over her eyes.

"Upon my word, Mr. Saltren," she said after an interval, "I have hardly an atom of self-confidence left. There never was a more perverse girl than myself, such a profound blunderer. I make a mistake whatever I do. What is to be done? What can I do?"

Giles Saltren was silent. The predicament was one from which there was no escape.

"Your mother's red coverlet was better than me," said Arminell. "That did serve some good purpose, to whatever end it was turned, but I always get from one difficulty into another, and drag my friends out of one discomfort into another still worse. Only here—here am I of any good at all; I was born into a wrong sphere, only now have I

returned to that system in which I ought to have been planted when called into existence. And yet even in this I produce a disturbing effect on the system of planets I have left."

"You cannot remain in this house, Miss Inglett, not now for the reason I gave at first, but because too much is put upon you."

"Nothing is put on me—I take on me what I feel qualified to execute. Do you remember the answer made by the young Persian to Cyrus, when the prince reprimanded him because his actions were not in accordance with his previously expressed sentiments? 'Sire,' he said, 'I perceive that I have two souls in me, one wilful and wicked, and the other modest and righteous. Sometimes one is awake and at other times the second.' So it is with me. Now I trust the nobler soul is rubbing its eyes and stretching itself, and the sandman is scattering dust in the eyes of the baser soul. My old soul was haughty and lived in an atmosphere of extravagance, and the new one is humble, and delights in the breath of common-place. Do you remember, Mr. Saltren,

telling me of the effect of the contrast to you of a return from Orleigh Park to Chillacot? You said that you were unfitted by the grandeur of the former to endure the meanness of the latter. At the time when you said this, I thought that such a translation to me would be unendurable, but the translation has been effected, and I am not miserable. On the contrary, but for my self-reproach and looking back on lost faces and scenes, I should be happier here; for the childlike spirit is waking in me, which is content with trifles."

"Happier — here! Miss Inglett, surely not."

"Yes—happier. I am happier in helping others. I am become useful to Mrs. Welsh, I relieve her of the baby, I can even cook fairly, I make the glass and silver shine. The work and worry here were more than your aunt could bear. Cooks are scarce as saints. The last your aunt had—oh! I have already mentioned the circumstances. I will not repeat them. I do not feel that the house is small, indeed I am glad that it is not

larger. We talk a good deal about the misdeeds of servants, and the difficulty there is in getting cooks ; in my former world we talked a good deal about the unscrupulousness of politicians, and the difficulty there was in getting morality among statesmen—political morality I mean. We discuss now the humours of the baby, what his dribbling means—whether teeth or disorder ; and we discussed then the humours of the public, and what the dribble meant that flowed so freely at public meetings. We think now how we may cut out and alter garments for the little creature ; and then, what adjustments and changes were needed for the satisfaction of the public. Conversation on each subject is as interesting and as profitless. I thought at one time that I could not live away from rocks and trees—I hardly miss them now. I have no time to consider whether I want them or not, because I am engaged all day. I really believe that the servant girl, the slavey, as your uncle calls her, is happier than your aunt or me, because she has the fewest responsibilities and the most work.”

Arminell spoke fast, half in jest, half in tears ; she spoke quickly, to conceal the emotion she felt.

“ Did you see a picture at the Royal Academy a few years ago representing the Babylonian Marriage Market ? In old Babylon all marriageable women were sent up to auction, and the sum paid for the pretty ones went as dower for those who were ugly. Thus was a balance preserved. I suspect it is much the same in life. There is equilibrium where we least expect it. The peacock has a gorgeous plumage and a horrible voice, the nightingale the sweetest song and the plainest feathers. Some of our most radiant flowers are without perfume, and some that smell odoriferously have little in the way of beauty to boast of. When I was in the aristocratic world, I had my luxuries, intellectual, æsthetic, and physical, but somehow, I lacked that joyousness I am finding here. In the middle class there is a freedom from the restraints which cramped us in the class above, and I have no doubt that there is an *abandon*, an *insouciance* in the

class below which makes up for the deficiency in the amenities, refinements, and glow of life in higher spheres. There is a making up of the balance, an adjustment of the equilibrium in the market-place of modern life as in that of ancient Babylon. Those with rank and wealth have to walk with muffled faces, only the plain and lowly may breathe freely and let the sun kiss their cheeks."

"Miss Inglett, I am sure, notwithstanding your efforts to make me think the contrary, that you are not happy."

"I tell you that I am. I say this in all sincerity. I do not deny that I feel a heart-ache. That is because my conscience reproaches me, and because I now love and regret what I once cast from me. If I had not been born elsewhere I should be fresh and happy now, but every plant suffers for a while when transplanted. I am throwing out my rootlets and fastening myself into the new soil, and will soon be firm fixed in it as if I had grown there from the beginning—my only trouble that I have dreams of the

past. A princess was once carried off by Rübezahl, giant spirit of the mountains, to his palace of crystal in the heart of the earth. He gave her all she could wish for, save one thing, the sound of the cattle bells on the Alpine pastures. His home was too far down for those sounds to reach. Whenever we are carried away from our home, we must always carry away with us some recollections of pleasant sounds and sights, and they linger with us as memories over which to weep. But there—we have had enough about myself—nay, too much. I want to hear what you are about, and what are your prospects.”

“I am in search of occupation, and have, so far, met only with disappointment.”

“You have been anxious. You are not looking well.”

“Naturally, I am anxious. I, like you, have the weight of the past oppressing me. Unlike you, I have not accommodated myself to my transplantation, but—in fact, I have not yet found soil in which my roots may take hold.”

“What soil do you want?”

“Any. There is a demand, I am told, for muscle ; the market is glutted with brain, or what passes for brain. As there is a deficiency in the supply of cooks, I will mount a white cap and apron and apply for a kitchen. But, seriously, apart from my affairs, which can wait, yours must be attended to.”

“But nothing can be done. You propose nothing. I can suggest nothing.”

Then in came Mrs. Welsh and Mrs. Saltren. The former was carrying the baby.

“It is all settled,” said Tryphœna Welsh. “Rejoice with me, Miss Inglett. I did want a cook, one not given to climbing ladders, and now I have got one ; now James will swear, for he has been spoiled by your cookery, Miss Inglett ; at last I have got a cook, the girl Thomasine Kite. Come, kiss the baby and thank Heaven.”

CHAPTER XLVIII.

L'ALLEMANDE.

“WHY, blessings on me!” exclaimed Mrs. Saltren, on her return to the lodgings in Bloomsbury. “Whoever expected the pleasure! And—I am sorry that you should see us here, Captain Tubb; not settled into our West-End house. Me and my son are looking about for a suitable residence, genteel and commodious, and with a W. to the address; but there is that run on the West End, and it is almost impossible, without interest, to get a house. My brother, however, who is like to be an M.P., is using his influence. But, captain, you see that every house won’t suit me; I’m not going to be in the shade any more. Well, it is a pleasure to see an Orleigh face here; and, pray, what has brought you to town, Captain Tubb?”

The visitor was in a black suit, that obtained for his son’s funeral; he held his hat

in one hand, with a broad black cloth band about it. With his disengaged hand he thrust up his beard and nibbled the ends.

Ladies play with their fans, coquette with them, talk with them, angle with them ; and an uninitiated person looking on wonders what is the meaning of the many movements made with the fan—the unfurling, the snapping, the half-opening. Perhaps Captain Tubb may have been coquetting, talking with his hat, for he turned it about, then looked into it, then smoothed it where it was ruffled, then put it under his chair, then took it up and balanced it on his knee. I cannot tell. If he was not speaking with his hat, what else could he have meant by all the movements he went through with it ?

“Well, ma’am,” said the captain ; “seeing as how I was in London, I thought I’d come and inquire how you was getting along. How are you ? And how is Mr. Jingles ?”

“I, myself, am but middling,” answered Mrs. Saltren, with stateliness. “My son—Mr. Giles Inglett Saltren—is very well indeed. I have gone through a great deal of trouble,

and that takes it out of one," said Mrs. Saltren, "like spirits of nitre."

"So it do, ma'am. There is a vale of misery; but the sale of Chillacot was an elevation in the same; and bank-notes are of that spongy nature that they sop up a lot o' tears. How, if I may make so bold as to ask, is your son thinking of investing the money? You see, ma'am, poor Captain Saltren and I knowed each other that intimate, our lines o' business running alongside of each other, that we was always a-hailing of each other. And now that he's gone, it seems natural for me to come and consult with his relict."

"You're flattering, Mr. Tubb. I must say, it is a pity my poor Stephen did not oftener consult me. If he had—but there, I won't say what I might. About Chillacot, he was that pig-headed that—but no, not another word. I've always heard say that the wife is the better half. What a mercy it is, and how it proves the wisdom of Providence, that the wusser half was took away first."

"You don't know, Mrs. Saltren, how

dreadful you're missed in Orleigh ; the place don't seem the same without you. And folks say such spiteful things too."

"As what, captain?"

"As that, having sold Chillacot, you ought to spend the purchase money there, and not be throwing it about in town."

"Do they now? But I'm not throwing it about ; it is all in the bank."

"I reckon Mr. Jingles—I mean your son, ma'am—has it there in his own name."

"Not at all, cap'n. The money is mine."

Captain Tubb whisked round the brim of his hat with both hands.

"There have been changes since you've gone," he said. "For one, there is old Sam Ceely married."

"Sam Ceely!" echoed Mrs. Saltren, and dropped her hands in her lap.

"It does seem almost wicked for a man at his time of life and crippled. But he and Joan Melhuish have been keeping company a long time, and now he has come in for some money. I hope," said the captain, "that the childer, if there come any, mayn't

come into this world with half their fingers blowed off through poaching, and a bad life through drunkenness."

Mrs. Saltren said nothing.

"There's another thing," pursued Captain Tubb. "The new quarry is running out, and we're thinking of reopening the old one."

"What—that which is full of water? It is worked out."

"Oh, no! there is more lime if more head be taken off; but there can be nothing done till the water is pumped out."

"You are thinking of pumping the quarry dry?"

"Yes, ma'am; with a water-wheel it could be cleared. I've talked the matter with Mr. Macduff and the trustees, and they are content to let me have the quarry rent free for five years, if I will put up the proper machinery to get out the water."

"The expense will be very heavy."

Captain Tubb stroked his beard, and put the ends into his mouth; then, after consideration, he admitted—

"Well, it will cost money."

“And are you really going to sink money in pumping out water?”

“Consider, Mrs. Saltren, that I shall have the working of the quarry for no rent at all during five years.”

“And you think it worth the outlay?”

“Seven per cent. guaranteed.”

“My son says that all I can expect to get for my capital if invested is five per cent.”

“I dare say, in town. At Orleigh, seven.”

Neither spoke for some time; Captain Tubb continued to play alternately with his beard and his hat; and Mrs. Saltren looked on the floor, then furtively at her visitor.

Presently the widow asked, “What will you take? Bottled stout or spirits and water?”

“Thank you, whichever you drink.”

“I drink neither,” answered Mrs. Saltren, drawing herself up. “I taste nothing but tea and water; but when an old friend comes and sees me, I make an exception. I have some whisky in the sideboard—Giles suffers in his inside, and I’m obliged to keep it by

me against his attacks. If you will allow me, I will get it out."

She rang for water and tumblers, and produced the spirits and sugar.

"Now tell me some further news of Orleigh," she said, as she stirred a glass.

"There has been the cottage of Patience Kite done up again," said he, "and she has gone back into it, which is unfortunate, for it would have suited me if I work the old quarry."

"But surely it would not be large enough for you, cap'n?"

He shook his head. He had finished his glass, and now abstractedly he half filled it with water.

"Since poor Arkie died, I'm very lonely. It is fifteen years since I buried my wife. I feel as lonely as does this drop o' water in the tumbler, without spirits to qualify it."

Mrs. Saltren pushed the whisky bottle towards him.

"Mix to your liking, captain," she said.

In old English country dances there is a figure known by the name of *l'allemande*,

which consists of a couple dancing round each other, back to back, after which they join hands and dance down the middle. The allemande lingers on in Sir Roger de Coverley, but is never performed in polite society. It survives in full force in country courtships.

We who live in the midst of artificiality of all kinds in our time of roses sigh for the unchecked liberty of the rustic swain and his milkmaid, and kick at the little etiquettes which restrain us within the limits of decorum. But, as a matter of fact, the love-making below stairs is oblique, prosaic, and of a back-to-back description, full of restraints and shynesses, of setting to partners, and allemanding about them. From the contemplation of pastoral pictures in red crayon on our Queen Anne walls, we carry away the notion that country love-making is direct, idyllic, and flowery. It is nothing of the sort. Come, follow the allemanding of this mature pair.

“I’ve not yet been to Brighton and seen the Aquarium,” said Mrs. Saltren. “Have you, Captain Tubb?”

“Can’t say I have, ma’am. It’s lone work going by oneself to see fishes.”

“So have I thought,” said the widow. “And for that reason I’ve not been.”

“It is a wonderful consideration,” said the captain, “how fond cats are of fish ; and how ill the skin and bones of a salt herring do make a cat ! For myself, I like trout.”

“Well, so do I !” said the widow. “They’re fresher than salt-water fish, as stands to reason.”

“The old lord put trout into the quarry-pond,” said Tubb.

“So I’ve heard ; and Saltren told me they were monstrous fat and large.”

“There is no catching them,” observed the captain ; “the water is clear, and they are wary. If ever I pump the pond dry, ma’am, you shall have a dish.”

“Trout should be eaten when they are just out of the water,” said Mrs. Saltren ; “they lose their flavour when a day old. I suppose it will not be possible for me to have them trout you so kindly offer the same day they are ketched.”

“Not possible if you are in London,” answered the captain. “Perhaps you’d best come to Orleigh to eat ’em.”

Then ensued a silence, broken at last by Mrs. Saltren, who remarked, with a sigh—

“There’ll be no eating of them trout till the pump is got.”

“That is true,” sighed Tubb. “But then the money is sure to be raised wherewith to put up the water-wheel and pump. Just consider, ma’am, seven per cent. You’ve not thought of investing, have you, what you got by the sale of Chillacot?”

This was a direct question, and the captain was scared at his temerity in putting it. He ate a whole mouthful of his beard.

“‘A fool and her money are soon parted,’ says the proverb,” answered Mrs. Saltren. “Consequently, I don’t think I’ll let my money go anywhere without me.”

Captain Tubb drew his chair closer; and, instead of settling the matter at once, began a fresh *allemand*.

“What do you think of mutton here in London?”

“ I don’t relish it ; and it is awfully dear, so is beef. Elevenpence and a shilling for what at Orleigh cost eightpence and ninepence. What fortunes them butchers must be making ! ”

“ It seems a sin to encourage them,” said Tubb.

“ It does go against my conscience,” agreed Mrs. Saltren.

“ Then,” argued the captain, “ I wouldn’t encourage them. Twopence and threepence in the pound is too much.”

“ I’ve a mind to return to the country,” said Mrs. Saltren ; “ I don’t want to encourage such wickedness.”

“ And then, ma’am, you can eat the trout fresh.”

“ Ah, captain ! but the capital for pumping ? ”

Then Captain Tubb cautiously slid one arm round Mrs. Saltren’s waist, and said—

“ Come, Marianne, with your capital, away from the mutton of town to the trout of the country.”

“I should like 'em fresh,” said the widow.
“We'll pump together for them.”

The youthful romance-reader exacts of a novel some love-making, and, to satisfy this reader, I have given this pathetic and romantic scene in full. To this sort of reader, style is nothing, characterisation is nothing, the grammar is nothing—indeed the whole story is nothing if there be in it no love-making.

That is the spice which flavours the dish, and without it the dish is rejected as unpalatable.

To encourage this reader, accordingly, at the outset a chapter was devoted to love-making in tandem, and another to love-making abreast. Only one of those love-affairs has come to a happy conclusion ; one was broken off by the breaking-down of Patience Kite's chimney. To make up to the reader for her disappointment, I have inserted this other love scene, and have introduced it near the end of my book to stimulate the jaded appetite to finish it.

Is it false to nature? Only those will say so who are ignorant of country courtships. Oh, for a Dionysian ear through which to listen to—not the sighs of prisoners, but the coo of turtle-doves! Now it so fell out that the writer of these lines was himself, on one occasion, an eye-and-ear witness to the wooing of a rustic couple—involuntarily. It came about in this way.

When I was a boy, on a Sunday, I had set a trap to catch rats that scared the scullery-maid in the back kitchen, and caused her to drop my mother's best china. But as rat-catching was not considered by my parents a Sabbatical amusement, I set my traps on the sly when they were at church on Sunday afternoon, and I was at home with a cold. The house-maid was left in charge, and naturally admitted her lover to assist her in watching after the safety of the house. Both seated themselves in the kitchen, one in the settle, the other in a chair before the fire. When I, in the back kitchen, heard them enter, I was afraid to stir lest my parents should be informed of my proceedings, and

the sanctity of the Sabbath be impressed tinglingly on me, across my father's knee, with the back of a hair-brush, a paper-knife, or a slipper. Accordingly I kept still.

Twenty minutes had elapsed, and no words having passed I stole to the kitchen door and peeped through. The maid sat on the settle, the swain on the chair, unctuously ogling each other in silence.

After the lapse of twenty minutes by the clock, the youth lifted up his voice and said solemnly, "Mary, what be that there thing for?" and he pointed to a button above the kitchen range.

"That, Joshua, is the damper."

Again silence fell over the kitchen, only broken by the ticking of the clock. After the expiration of twenty minutes more, the youth further inquired, "And what be the damper for, Mary?"

"For to make the fire go a smother-like, Joshua," she replied.

Again twenty minutes elapsed: then I heard a long-drawn sigh, and Joshua said in

a grave, emotionless voice, "Mary, there be no damper in my buzzom."

"There come master and mistress from church," exclaimed Mary; "Joshua, you must go."

"Lord!" said the swain, slowly rising, "how I have enjoyed myself, Mary."

Next Sunday the banns were called.

This was slow allemanding indeed, quite at the cinque-pace, but then it was the love-making of an inexperienced youthful couple. Marianne Saltren and Captain Tubb had gone through the process at least once previously, so that there was not the same shyness and stiffness in their courtship. Nevertheless they conformed to the rule of country courtship, and allemanded about each other, though, I grant you, at a sprightlier pace than that of Joshua and Mary, before they joined hands and went down the middle.

CHAPTER XLIX.

TWO ORLEIGH GIRLS.

Mrs. WELSH burst in on Arminell one evening just before dinner with a face of dismay, and both her hands uplifted.

“Mercy on us ! What do you think ? ”

Arminell stood up. “What has happened, Mrs. Welsh ? ” she asked in some alarm.

“My dear ! You might have knocked me down with a feather. I thought that the girl would be sure to know how to do boiled rabbit with onion sauce.”

“Does she not ? ”

“And there was to be a Swiss pudding.”

“That, probably, she would not know how to make, but she can read, and has Mrs. Warne to fly to for light.”

“I put out the currant jelly for the pudding, and she has spread it over the rabbit on top of the onion sauce.”

Arminell was unable to restrain a laugh.

“ I went down to see her dish up, and that is what she has done. Poured the onion sauce over the rabbit and heaped the currant jelly a top of that. Whatever shall we do ? The last cook was bad enough, but she did not spoil good food.”

“ What induced her to do this ? ”

“ She says that she has been told to put currant jelly with hare, and so she has put it with rabbit, as she saw the jelly-pot set out on the kitchen table for the pudding.”

“ And the pudding ? ”

“ Is without anything. We cannot eat the rabbit. That is spoiled ; and the pudding is nothing without red currant jelly. Whatever will Mr. Welsh do for his dinner ? ”

“ But the girl had Mrs. Warne’s Cookery Book on the table for reference ? ”

“ Yes, but she also had a sensational novel.”

Arminell laughed again. “ I am afraid the education she has received has garnished her head much in the same fashion as she has garnished the rabbit, several good things jumbled together, making an unpalatable whole. I will go and see what can be done.”

“ I have given the girl notice.”

“ Surely not, Mrs. Welsh. She has but just come to town.”

“ I spoke sharply to her, and girls now-a-days will not bear a word. She flew out at me and said she would not remain another hour in the house. Girls give themselves such airs. She knows my extremity, how long I have been without a cook.”

Arminell descended to the kitchen, but Thomasine was not there. The boiled rabbit stood on the table crowned with onion sauce and crimson jelly. Near it lay, wide open, a book, not so thick as Mrs. Warne's *Cookery Manual*, and Arminell stooped to look at it. The book was Gaboriau's "*Gilded Clique*," much stained and cockled, as if it had been wet through, and then dried. Arminell turned it over ; it was her own copy, which she had flung from her when in the Owl's Nest, to arouse and arrest the attention of Captain Saltren. She could not doubt that it was the identical book, for her name was pencilled on it, and the water had not effaced the pencil scrawl. She did

not know, what was the fact, that the book had undergone two immersions, and had twice been recovered by Patience, and that on the last occasion she had passed it on to her daughter.

Arminell stood turning over the disfigured volume, speculating on how it had come into Thomasine's hands, and thinking of the occasion when she had last read it ; and so thinking, for a moment she forgot the rabbit with its incongruous garnishment, and why she had descended to the kitchen. She was roused from her reverie by the maid-of-all-work coming in excitedly.

"Oh my, miss ! What do you think ? Thomasine has flown out at missus, and packed up her things in a bundle, and gone."

"Thomasine gone !"

"Lawk, miss ! She wouldn't stand no nonsense, she said ; and if the missus didn't like her cooking she might cook for herself. She wouldn't stay. Thomasine had a flaming temper ; it's the way of them red-headed girls."

"Thomasine gone !"

"Gone in a tantrum, her cheeks as red as her head. I can't think what folks find to admire in her hair. It is thick and red. I don't fancy carrots."

"But whither is she gone? She is a stranger in London, and has no friends."

"I don't suppose, miss, she knows herself."

"Has she gone back to Mrs. Saltren?"

"I don't fancy so. She was in such a rage, she thought of nothing but going, and never even asked for her wage."

"Do you know in which direction she went?"

"No, I was not on the look-out. She came flaring on me to give me good-bye, and away she went. She said that as the missus had insulted her, go she would to where she would be valued."

"Have you no idea where she is gone?"

"I don't know." The girl hesitated, then said, "Thomasine said as how there was a gentleman at the hotel where Mrs. Saltren first was, who admired her and said she ought never to demean herself to go into

service—I can't say, she has spoken of him once or twice, and I fancy he came to look for her when she was at the lodgings with Mrs. Saltren—she may have gone to ask his advice what to do and where to go."

"That is enough," said Arminell, and ran upstairs, put on her bonnet, and hastened into the street. She was doubtful in which direction to turn, but seeing the postman coming with the letters, she asked him if he had observed a girl with red hair.

"What, the new cook at Mrs. Welsh's, miss? Oh, yes, she has gone by with a bundle. Very 'ansome girl, that."

Arminell went down the Avenue, and at the corner encountered a policeman on duty. She asked him the same question. He also had noticed Thomasine. Indeed he knew her. Her splendid build, her profusion of glowing hair, and beautiful complexion were a phenomenon in Shepherd's Bush, and all milkmen, butchers' boys, postmen, police, knew and admired her, though she had been in the house of Mrs. Welsh but a fortnight.

"Yes, miss, she's gone down that way—

has a bundle in her hand. I asked her whither she was going and she said she was leaving her situation because her mistress was impudent to her. Wery 'ansome gall, that."

Arminell went on to a cabstand ; she was near the Hammersmith Station. As a disengaged flyman hailed her, she asked him if he had seen a young woman go by carrying a bundle.

"A 'ansome gal with red hair? To be sure. 'Ailed her, but she said she'd take a 'bus."

Take a 'bus!—she had gone on to that great centre of radiating streets and roads a few steps ahead. Arminell quickened her pace, almost ran, and reached the main artery of traffic between the City and Hammersmith through Kensington. She had a sharp eye, and in a moment saw Thomasine, who was mounting an omnibus. She ran, as the horses started—ran, regardless of what any one might think, but could not overtake the 'bus. She signed to the driver of a passing empty cab.

“Keep up with the Hammersmith omnibus,” she said, panting. “When it stops, set me down. Here is a shilling.” She sprang in, and speedily caught up the scarlet-bodied conveyance, descended from the cab, entered the omnibus, and seated herself beside Thomasine.

She was out of breath, the perspiration ran off her brow, and her heart beat fast. She could not speak, but she laid her hand on that of the girl which rested on the bundle, and the action said, “I have taken you in charge.”

She was beside Thomasine, and could not see her face ; she did not attempt to look at her, but kept her hand where she had laid it, till the omnibus halted at Broad Walk in front of Kensington Palace ; by this time she had recovered her breath sufficiently to bid the conductor let her out. She rose hastily, still holding Thomasine, who did not stir.

“Come,” said Arminell, “come with me,” and looked the girl straight in the eyes.

Thomasine’s hand quivered under that of Arminell, and her face flushed. She dropped

her eyes and rose. In another moment they were together on the pavement.

"We will walk together," said Miss Inglett, "up the broad avenue. I want to speak to you. I want to know why you are running away, and whither you are going?"

"Please, miss," answered the girl, "I ain't going to be spoken to by Mrs. Welsh. Her's nothing, nor old Welsh neither. He is the brother of Marianne Saltren, and no better than me or my mother. They may set up to be gentlefolk and give themselves airs, but they are only common people like myself."

"You have made a mistake, Thomasine. You should not have put the currant jelly over the boiled rabbit. Those who make mistakes must have them corrected. How would you like to have your pretty velvet bonnet spoiled by Mrs. Welsh spilling ink over it?"

"I should be angry."

"Well, it is the same case. You have spoiled the nice dinner she had provided for Mr. Welsh."

"Welsh is nothing. His father was an

old Methody shopkeeper, who ran away, having cheated a lot of folk out of their money. I know all about the Welshes. I'm not going to stand cheek from them."

"But you will listen to a word from me?"

"Oh, miss, you are different. I wouldn't be impudent to you for anything. But it is other with them stuck-ups as are no better than myself."

"You will not try to twist yourself away from me?"

"No, miss."

"I want you to tell me, Thomasine, whither you were running? Were you going to Mrs. Saltren?"

"Mrs. Saltren!" scoffed the girl. "She is nothing. Marianne Saltren, the daughter of the canting old cheat, and widow of a mining captain. I won't be servant to her. Not I."

"Whither were you going, then?"

Thomasine was silent.

Arminell walked at her side; she had let go the girl's hand.

"I ran after you," said Arminell.

“Was that what made you so hot and out of breath, miss?”

“Yes, I was frightened when I heard that you had gone away.”

“What was there to frighten you? I had not taken any spoons.”

“I never supposed that for a moment. I was alarmed about yourself.”

“I can take care of myself. I am old enough.”

“I am not sure that you can take care of yourself, Thomasine; you and I come from the same place, dear Orleigh, and it is such a pleasure to me to see you, and hear you talk. When I found that you were gone, I thought what shall I do without my dear Tamsine to talk with about the old place I love so much?”

“Why don’t you go back to it, miss, if you like it?” asked the girl.

“Because I cannot. Come closer to me.” Arminell caught the girl’s hand again. “I also ran away. I ran away, as you are running away now. That has brought upon me great sorrow and bitter self-reproach, and I

would save you from doing the same thing that I have done, and from the repentance that comes too late."

"They said at Orleigh, miss, that you were dead."

"I am dead to Orleigh and all I love there. Why did you come to town with Mrs. Saltren, if you do not care to be with her?"

"Because I wanted to see the world, but I had no intention of remaining with her."

"Then what did you intend?"

Thomasine shrugged her shoulders. "I wanted to see life, and have some fun, and know what London was like. I don't want to slave here as I slaved in a farm."

"You came to town restless and discontented, so did I; and now I would give everything I have to be set back where I was. You came in the same spirit, and I have stopped you on the threshold of a grave disaster, and perhaps saved you from unutterable misery. Thomasine, dear Thomasine, tell me the truth. Were you going to that hotel where some one flattered your vanity

and held out to you prospects of idleness? You were leaving hard work and the duties that fell to your lot where God placed you, because impatient of restraint. You had learned the one lesson that is taught in all schools to boys and girls alike—hatred of honest work. Tamsine, you must return with me.”

The girl pouted. Arminell, looking round, saw the curl in her lip.

“I don’t care to be under the Welshes,” said the girl; “nor Marianne Saltren, neither. They ain’t better than me, and why shouldn’t I be as stylish as they?”

“If you resent being with them, be with me. Be my maid. I am not going to remain in Shepherd’s Bush. I intend to take a house somewhere in the country—somewhere where I can be useful, and, Tamsine, find work, hard work that I can do for others. That is what I seek now for myself. Will you come with me? Then we two Orleigh girls will be together, that will be charming.”

Thomasine turned and looked wonderingly

at Miss Inglett. We two Orleigh girls! We—the baron's daughter and the wise woman's bastard.

“I'd like my frolic first,” said Thomasine.

“After that—I could not receive you,” answered Arminell gravely.

“I don't see,” said Thomasine, still pouting, but uneasy and undecided, with the colour flying in flakes over her face and showing through the transparent complexion. “I don't see why we are to be always kept at work, and not be allowed to amuse ourselves. We aren't young for long.”

“Tamsine,” said Arminell, “poor Arkie Tubb sat by you when your mother's cottage was being pulled down, and when you thought that she was in danger, and you could not run to her aid yourself, because you had turned your ankle, you sent him. You sent him to his death. The chimney fell and buried him. If he had considered himself he would not have risked his life for your mother. We all honour him for what he did. He never was clever and sharp in life, he failed in everything he

undertook, he even failed then, for he did not bring your mother out of the ruin, he was buried in it himself. But he was a hero in his death because he sacrificed himself for others—for you, because he loved you, and for your mother.”

Thomasine said nothing, but her hand twitched in that of Arminell.

“You must be worthy of him, remain worthy of him. Thomasine, if you follow your own self-will and passion for pleasure, people will say it was well that Arkie Tubb died, she was not deserving of him.”

They had reached the head of the Broad Walk, and issued from Kensington Park into Uxbridge Road. The stream of traffic flowed east and west, east to the City, west to Shepherd's Bush, past them, and they stood watching the two currents. Thomasine withdrew her hand.

Arminell was certain that this was a critical moment in the girl's heart. She said nothing more. She had said enough, she waited. Thomasine turned her face east, and took a step in that direction with a red flush in her

cheek. Then the red flush rose to her brow and deserted her cheek, and she turned back.

Presently she said, "May I take your hand again, miss?"

Arminell readily gave it.

Then Thomasine strode to the west, holding Arminell. She seemed fearful of herself if left to herself, but confident whilst holding the hand of Arminell. The good angel had conquered, and that good angel was the thought of poor, blundering, kindly, stupid Arkie Tubb.

Is ever a life utterly thrown away? It had seemed so when the stones crushed the soul out of that lad. A profitless life had ended unprofitably. But see! Here at the end of Broad Walk, Kensington, that cast-away life was the saving of the girl whom he had loved unprofitably.

CHAPTER L.

A RAZOR TO CUT CABBAGES.

AN old man told me one day that he had spent fifty years of his life in making a concordance of the Bible—he had never heard of Cruden's work. The labour of fifty years thrown away ! I know another who sank all his savings in publishing a Law Compendium he had compiled, and when it was published sold two copies.

Jingles was going through a heart-breaking experience. He was discovering that all he had acquired in school and university was a disadvantage to him in the position in which he now found himself.

He had been well educated, had been polished and sharpened ; but the money spent on his education might as well have been thrown into the sea, and the time devoted to learning have been as profitably given up to billiards.

This would not have been the case had Giles Inglett Saltren been able to enter a learned profession, but as this was out of the question, his education was profitless. He had been qualified to take his place in a social class in which he was no more able to show himself.

One day Jingles had given his razor to a boy to sharpen for him. The lad took it to a grindstone and put an edge to the back. "Please, sir," said the fellow when reprimanded, "the front was middling sharp, so I thought I'd put an edge to the back." Jingles remembered this incident now with some bitterness. He had been sharpened on the wrong side for cutting his way. He was a classic scholar, knew his *Æschylus* and *Euripides*, and could write elegant Latin verses. He was disciplined in the manners and habits of the upper class. But he knew little of modern languages, and his working out a sum in compound addition left much to be desired.

At first he looked out for such a situation as would suit him, but speedily discovered

that what he must find was a situation which he would suit.

A librarianship, a secretaryship, lastly a tutorship, commended themselves to him as situations for which he was qualified ; but such situations are few, and the applicants are legion.

The paralytic in the Gospel was always wanting to be let down into Siloam after the troubling of the water, but invariably found that some one else had stepped in whilst he was being carried, or was laboriously dragging himself to the brink. It was so with Jingles. When he did hear of a vacancy that would suit him, and made application for it, it was to find that another had stepped in before him.

He tried for private pupils. He was ready to attend any house and teach during the day. He would prefer that to being again taken into a family as a resident tutor, but he was not even as successful as Nicholas Nickleby. There were no little Miss Kenwigses to be taught.

He had a difficulty about giving references.

He could not mention Lady Lamerton, and invite inquiries concerning him of the family at Orleigh Park. At first he was reluctant to apply to his uncle for a testimonial, or for leave to use his name, but when he found that his way was blocked through lack of references, he swallowed his pride and asked the requisite permission of Mr. Welsh. The leave was granted and conduced to nothing.

If pride could have fattened, about this time Jingles ought to have grown plump, he swallowed so much of it ; but it was like blackbeetles to a cat—it made him grow lanker.

He spent a good deal of money in advertising in the daily papers, but got no answers. Then he took to answering advertisements, and met with no better success. Then he applied to agents, paid fees, and got no further. It was to the advantage of these go-betweens to put bad men in good posts, and thrust good men into bad posts, to plant square men into round holes, and round men in square holes.

Every change brought an additional fee,

and naturally this consideration had its influence on the agents.

There was a whole class of middle schools conducted by speculative men without education themselves, for the sons of tradesmen and farmers, where the teaching given was of the worst description, and the moral supervision was of the most inefficient quality. The ushers in these were Germans, Swiss, and French, men out of pocket and out at elbows, picking up a wretched subsistence, and eating as their daily diet humble pie. The doors of these "Academies for Young Gentlemen" were closed to Saltren because he was an University man and a scholar. He was dangerous, he knew too much, and might expose the hollowness of these swindles.

Convinced at length that there was no hope of his getting any place such as he would like, in which his acquirements would avail, Jingles turned to commercial life. But here also he found that his education stood in the way. He went to Mincing Lane in quest of a clerkship in one of the great tea,

rice, sugar, and spice firms ; but there an accountant and not a logician was wanted.

Next he visited Mark Lane and sought admission into one of the great corn-factors' offices. He was too raw for these men ; what were wanted in such houses as these in Mark and Mincing Lanes were sharp lads of from seventeen to nineteen, trained at Board Schools, who could reckon rapidly, and were not above being sent messages ; lads who would be filed into business shape, who were disciplinable to take a special line, not young men educated already and with their heads stuffed with matter utterly useless for business.

In a state of discouragement Jingles next visited Lloyds. There it was the same. What did he want ? To become an underwriter ! Well and good, let him deposit five thousand pounds and find a clerk at two hundred, with five per cent. on all transactions, till he had himself thoroughly mastered the system of underwriting. He could not afford this. He must be taken on as clerk. Where ? At Lloyds, or at one of the Marine

Insurance offices that has its base at Lloyds. What did he know of the work? The clerk has to go round with policies to be initialed, and when the books return to the office after four o'clock, he has to make them up. What did he understand about the value of cargoes and the risks run? There was no place for him in a Marine Insurance. Some one recommended him to try stockbroking.

Like a greenhorn, as he was, Jingles made at once for the Exchange, and passing the porters, entered the House. The vast space was crowded. The din bewildered him. He heard names shouted from the telegraph offices, the call of porters, the voices of the stock-jobbers raised in dispute or argument. All at once an exclamation, "Seventeen hundred."¹ Then ensued a gravitation towards himself, and in a moment his hat was knocked over his eyes, then he was thrust, elbowed, jostled from side to side.

When he recovered his sight, his hat was snatched from his hand and flung across the

¹ This was the original number on Exchange, and the call is one to attract attention to an unwarranted intrusion.

House. Next, his umbrella was wrenched from him, and with it he was struck over the back.

“You have no right in here, sir,” said a porter.

“Don’t mind him,” shouted a dozen around. “We are heartily glad to make your acquaintance.”

The horseplay was resumed, and as the young man’s blood rose, and he resented the treatment, and showed fight, he was still more roughly handled, and finally found himself kicked and hustled out of the Exchange.

Giles Saltren stood on the step without, minus a hat and umbrella, and with his coat split down the back—his best coat put on to produce a good impression on employers—stood dazed and humbled, an object of derision to match-boys and flower-girls who danced about him, with words and antics of mockery.

Presently an old white-haired stockbroker, who came out of the Exchange, noticed him, and stopped and spoke to him, and bade him not be angry. What had occurred was due

to his having intruded where he had no right to be. Jingles answered that he had gone there because he was in quest of employment, whereupon he was told he might just as well have jumped into the Thames because he desired engagement on a penny steamer.

“Young gentleman,” said the broker, “it is of no use your looking for employment in our line of business. We have a Clerks’ Provident Fund, to which every clerk out of employ subscribes ; and if a broker wants a man at forty, sixty, a hundred, two hundred pounds, he applies to the secretary of the Provident Fund, who furnishes him with the man he wants out of the number of those then disengaged. You have no experience, or you would not have ventured into the House. If I want an errand boy, I take on the son of a clerk. You have, I fear, no connexions in the line to speak a word for you ! You have been to the University, do you say ? ”

The broker whistled.

“ My good sir, I do not recommend you

to waste time in applying at stockbrokers' offices ; you are likely to make acquaintance with the outside only of their office doors. There is more chance for the son of a bed-maker or a chimney-sweep than for you."

Giles Saltren next sought admission into a bank, but found that this was a business even more close than that of stock-jobbing. The banking business was like the sleeping Brynhild, surrounded by a *waberlohe*, a wall of flame ; and he was no Siegfried to spur his horse through the ring of fire.

Having discovered how futile were his attempts to enter a bank, he turned to the docks, in hopes of getting a situation in a shipping-office, only there also to meet with rebuff.

Then he saw an advertisement from a West-End shop-keeper, one of those giants of trade, who has an universal store. There was a vacancy in the stocking department for a young man. Applicants were to appear personally at a fixed hour on Friday next.

Giles Inglett hesitated before he could resolve to offer himself as a counter-jumper,

and acquire the "What can we serve you next with, ma'am?" To descend to the counter from the Oxford schools was a great descent; but Jingles was like a vessel in stress of weather, throwing overboard all her lading. Away must go his Greek, his Latin, his logic, his position as an University scholar, that of a gentleman, his self-esteem, certainly, his self-respect to some extent, his ambition altogether.

But why not? He was not born to be a gentleman; it was by a happy accident that he had been given an education that furnished him with most accomplishments which adorn a man of birth and standing. He must remember that he was not entitled by his parentage to anything above a shopman's place, and must gulp down this junk of pride.

On the appointed day Saltren went to Westbourne Grove, and found that he was but one of between three or four hundred young men, applicants for the vacancy behind the stocking counter. His appearance, delicate and refined, the diffidence with which he spoke, were against him, and he found

himself at once and decisively rejected, and a vulgar young fellow at his side, full of self-conceit, was chosen instead.

Saltren made application in other offices, but always without success : his ignorance of shorthand was against him. In the offices of solicitors it is indispensable that shorthand be practised by the clerks. It facilitates and expedites the dictation of letters.

So also, had he been a proficient in shorthand, he might have obtained work as a reporter at meetings. But to his grief he discovered that all the education he had received which tended to broaden the mind was valueless, that only was profitable which contracted the intellect. Saltren, moreover, was speedily given to understand that unless he went in search of a situation with gold in his hand, he could get nothing. With capital, his intellectual culture would be graciously overlooked and excused. His university education was such a drawback, that it could only be forgiven if he put money into the concern where he proposed to enter.

Saltren had come to the end of his own

resources, and he saw that without capital he could get admission nowhere. He could not obtain a clerkship in any kind of business ; the sole chance of entering a commercial life was to become a partner in one.

There was abundance of advertisements for partners in the daily papers, but nearly all the businesses, when examined, proved unsatisfactory, and the risk of losing all too great. Giles Saltren had, indeed, no capital of his own ; but he resolved, should he see a chance of making an investment that was safe, and one which would give him work in a partnership, to propose to his mother that she should in this manner dispose of the purchase-money for Chillacot. She would derive from it an annual sum as interest, and have the satisfaction as well of knowing that she had found employment for her son.

At last he found what he sought, and sanguine as to the results, he came to his mother's lodgings to make the proposal to her.

" Please, Mr. Saltren," said the landlady ; " your mother has gone out with the admiral."

" The admiral ? "

“ Ah, the admiral, sir ! ” said the landlady, with a knowing smile. “ You don’t mean to say, Mr. Saltren, that your mother hasn’t told you? and a beautiful breakfast spread, and a cake with a cupid at top all made of sugar.”

“ But what admiral? We know no admiral ! ”

“ What, not Admiral Tubb? Well, now, Mr. Saltren, who would have thought your mother would have been so sly as not to have told you that she was going to give you a new pa ? ”

“ Upon my word, I do not understand you.”

“ Then, Mr. Saltren, you come along with me, and see the breakfast laid in the dining-room, and the beautiful wedding-cake all over orange-flowers. It does seem sharp work too, when your father died so very recently ; but if widows don’t seize the moments as they fly, and take admirals by the forelock, they may be left in their weeds till it is too late. Why, bless me, Mr. Saltren, here they come ! ”

“ But,” persisted Jingles, much astonished, and almost persuaded that Mrs. Bankes, the

lodging-house-keeper, had gone off her head, "what admiral?"

"Admiral Tubb, sir, R.N. Your mother told me so. There they are. Lawk, sir! he in lavender don't-mention-ems and yaller gloves; and she in a beautiful Brussels veil that must have cost ten pounds, and the cabby wearing of a favour."

Into the house sailed Mrs. Saltren—Saltren no more, but Tubb—with a long white veil over her head, and orange-blossoms in her hand, wearing a grey silk gown. Captain Tubb advanced with her on his arm, and looked red and sheepish.

"My child," said Marianne, "come and salute your new father. This distinguished officer—I mean," she hesitated and corrected herself, "Bartholomew Tubb has prevailed on me to lay aside my widow's cap for the bridal-veil. And, oh! my Giles, you will be pleased to hear that the capital I got through the sale of Chillacot is to be sunk in the old quarry, and me and the admiral—I mean Tubb—are going to join hands and pump the water out."

CHAPTER LI.

A PATCH OF BLUE SKY.

ABOUT the same time that Jingles was situation-hunting, Arminell was engaged in house-hunting. She had made up her mind to take a cottage on the south coast. Mrs. Welsh had, at length, got a cook who did passably. She had fits occasionally and frothed at the mouth ; she also kicked out with her legs convulsively on these occasions and kicked over every little table near her, regardless of what was on it—a glass custard-dish, a sugar-bowl, or, indeed, anything smashable. However, between her fits she was a good plain cook, and the fits did not come on every day. When they did, Mrs. Welsh telegraphed to her husband to dine at a restaurant, and she satisfied herself on scraps. Consequently, the inconvenience was not serious, and as cooks are rare as capercailzies, Mrs. Welsh was glad to have

one even with the disadvantage of epileptic attacks.

Mr. Welsh placed himself and his time at the service of Arminell. He went with her to Brighton, St. Leonards, Worthing, Littlehampton, Bournemouth ; and finally Arminell decided on purchasing a small house at the last-named place—a pretty villa among the pines, with a view of the sea, a garden, a conservatory. The girl had scruples about troubling the journalist so much, but he insisted that his excursions with her gave him pleasure, and he did everything he could for her, and did it in the most cheery, considerate and hearty manner.

Welsh was a shrewd man of business, and he fought hard over the terms before he bought, and keenly scrutinised the title.

Then ensued the furnishing, and in this Arminell did not trust Mr. Welsh. His ambition was to do all his purchases cheaply. He would have ordered her sets for her several rooms in Tottenham Court Road, and gloried in having got them at an extraordinarily low figure. Arminell took Mrs. Welsh with her

when making her purchases ; not that she placed any value on that lady's taste, but because she was well aware that by so doing she was giving to her hostess the richest treat she could devise. There is, undoubtedly, positive enjoyment in spending money, and next to the pleasure of spending money oneself, is that of accompanying another shopping who spends money. After a day's shopping and the expenditure of a good many pounds, unquestionably one feels morally elevated. And one is conscious of having done meritoriously when one acts as a goad to a companion, urging her to more lavish outlay, spurring her on when her heart fails at the estimation of the cost. How mean you think your friend if she buys material at twopence-three-farthings instead of that which is superior at threepence. How vehemently you impress on her the mistake of purchasing only five-and-a-half yards instead of six. Margin, you urge, should always be given. It is false economy to cut your cloth too close. With what rigidity of spinal marrow do you sit on your

tall chair and scorn the woman on your left who asks for cheaper Swiss embroidery at threepence-farthing, when your friend on your right is buying hers at a shilling. With what an approving glow of conscience do you smile when you hear your companion's bill reckoned up as over fifteen pounds ; and then you snatch the opportunity to secure a remnant or a piece of tarnished material, with a haughty air, and bid that it be put in with the rest—it will serve for a charity in which you are interested : to wit—but you do not add this—the charity that begins and ends with home.

Next to the enjoyment of shopping with a friend, who is lavish of her money, comes the luxury of discussing the purchases after, of debating whether this stamped velvet was, after all, the right thing, and whether that tapestry silk would not have been better ; whether the carpet and the curtains will harmonise, and the paper of the wall accord with both.

It was a disappointment to Mrs. Welsh that Arminell did not have a dado with

water-reeds and sunflowers, and storks flying or standing on one leg. "It is the fashion, I assure you," said she, "as you may see in our drawing-room at Shepherd's Bush." But then, it was a shock of surprise and adoring admiration that came on Tryphœna Welsh, when, after having advised jute for curtains and sofa-covers, because so extraordinarily cheap, Arminell had deliberately turned to stamped velvet.

"Dear me!" said Mrs. Welsh to her husband one night, when they were alone, "how you do worship Miss Inglett. Not that I'm jealous. Far be it from me, for I admire her as much as I love her; but I'm surprised at it in you—and she related to the nobility. It is inconsistent, Welsh, with your professions, as inconsistent as it would be for Mr. Spurgeon to be found crossing himself in a Roman Catholic chapel."

"My dear Tryphœna," said James Welsh, "I do not deny that the British aristocracy has its good qualities—for one, its want of stuck-upedness. For another, its readiness to adapt itself to circumstances. It is part

of their education, and it is not part of ours, and I don't pretend to that which I have not got. They used to make wooden dolls with a peg through their joints, so that they would move their limbs forward and backward, and that was all. Now there is another contrivance introduced, the ball and socket system for the joints, and dolls can now move their legs and arms in all directions, describe circles with them, do more with them than I can with mine. It is the same with the faculties of the aristocracy, there is a flexibility and a pliability in them that shows they are on the ball and socket system, and not upon the peg arrangement. I don't mean to say that there are not to be found elsewhere faculties so variable and adaptable, but it is exceptional elsewhere ; among the upper classes the whole educational system is directed towards making the mental joints revolve in their sockets, and getting rid of all woodenness and pegishness. Look at Miss Inglett. She was ready to be just what you wanted—cook, nurse, butler, seamstress—and yet never for a second has ceased to be what she is, a tip-top lady.”

“ You talk, James, in a different way from what you used to talk.”

“ I’ll tell you what stands in the way with us. Even if we be gifted with faculties on the ball and socket system, we are afraid of using them except as is allowed by fashion, and is supposed to be elegant. We are ever considering whether we shall not lose respect if we employ them in this way, set them at that angle, fold them in such a manner, turn them about in such another. I know once,” continued Mr. Welsh, “ I had burst my boot over the toe, just before I went for an important interview with an editor. I cut a sorry figure in his presence, because I was considering the hole in my boot, and whether my stocking showed through. I put my foot under the chair as far back as I could, then drew it forward and set the other foot on it. Then I hid it behind my hat, then curled it over in an ungainly fashion, so as to expose only the sole ; and all the while I was with the editor, I had no thought for what we were talking about ; I could not take my attention from the hole in my boot. And it

is the same with us who haven't an all-round and complete culture—we are conscious of burst seams, and splits, and exposures, and are anxious to be screening them, and so are never at our ease."

When Mr. Welsh began to talk, he liked to talk on uninterruptedly. His wife knew this, and humoured him.

"Connected with this subject, Tryphœna, is the way in which the aristocracy manage their trains."

"Their trains, James?"

"Exactly—their trains or skirts. You know how that it is not possible for you to be in a crowd without having your skirts trodden on and ripped out of the gathers. There used to be a contrivance, Tryphœna, I remember you had it once, like a pair of bell-ropes. You put your fingers into rings, and up came your train in a series of loops and folds, on the principle of the Venetian blind. But somehow you were always pulling up your skirt just too late, after it had been be-trampled and be-muddled. Now from what I have observed, the skirts and trains of the

aristocracy are imbued with an imparted vitality from their persons, for all the world like the tail of a peacock, which it elevates when it steps about in the dirt. Their skirts shrink and rise of themselves, whenever a rude foot approaches, or they tread where the soil may bespatter."

"Now, really, James—how can human beings lift their tails?"

"My dear, I am speaking figuratively. If you do not understand—remain in ignorance. There is, as the clown says in 'Twelfth Night,' no darkness like ignorance. I suppose you know, my dear, what it is to be pressed upon and trampled on by those just behind you in the social ball? Well, some persons manage so cleverly that they do not get their trains crumpled; and others are in constant alarm and suspicion of everyone who approaches within a pace of theirs."

Welsh lighted a cigar.

"Don't you mistake me and think that I have given up my opinions. Nothing of the sort. I notice the difference between the aristocracy and ourselves, but I do not say

that I do not estimate the middle class above theirs. On the contrary, I think our order of the nobility is the most honourable. To us belongs the marquisate."

"James, how can you talk such nonsense?"

"It is a fact, Tryphœna, that the marquis or margrave takes, or rather took, his title from the debatable ground he held. He was the earl who watched the marches against the barbarians; he protected civilisation from overthrow. It was because he stood with drawn sword on the confines, armed *cap-à-pie*, that the counts and viscounts and the barons sat in clover at home and grew fat and wanton. We, Tryphœna, guard the marches, we occupy the debatable ground, and we have to be perpetually on the alert, to make blaze of beacons, blow cow-horns, and rattle drums at the least approach or signs of approach of barbarism. Of course we are touchy, tenacious of our right, sensitive about our skirts, and must bluster and deal blows to protect them. We hold the banat, the military frontier between culture and savagery, and it is because of us that the noblemen and gentlemen of England

can dwell at home at ease. Of course our hands are rough with grip of the lance and sword, and our boots smell of the stable. Heigh-ho !—here comes my Lady Fair—and not looking herself.”

He stood up, and threw away his cigar into the grate and then went to the window and threw up the sash. Arminell entered in her bonnet ; her face was sad, and her eyes were red as though she had been crying.

“ Miss Inglett ! I shall kill myself for having lit a cigar,” said Welsh, “ I am vexed beyond measure. I did not think you were going to favour us with your company. As for Tryphœna, she loves smoke as a salaman der loves fire. But—what is the matter ? You remind me of a certain river I have read about in Bohn’s translation of ‘ Herodotus.’ The river flowed sweet from its source for many miles, but finally a tiny rill of bitterness entered it, and throughout the rest of its course to the sea the waters had lost their freshness.”

“ Not so, Mr. Welsh,” said Arminell with a smile. “ At least, I trust not. May I not

rather have reached the point to which the tide mounts? It is not bitterness that is in me, but just a smack of the salt of the mighty far-off ocean that runs up the estuary of life, and qualifies sooner or later the water of every soul."

"What has troubled you? I'm sure something has gone wrong."

"I have been with Thomasine to see your nephew."

"What—Jingles! you should not have done that."

"Thomasine had paid a visit to Mrs. Bankes, the landlady of the house where Mrs. Saltren lodged before she married and departed; and the good woman told the girl something about Mr. Saltren that made me uneasy. So I went to see him."

"You have acted inconsiderately," said James Welsh.

"I do not say that it was a proper and prudent thing to do, and yet, under the circumstances, justifiable, and I have no doubt you will forgive me."

"You must make a full confession before I

pronounce the absolution," said the journalist.

"Thomasine goes occasionally to see the good woman of the lodgings and her servant, and she heard so sad an account of your nephew that she communicated it to me."

"What is the matter with him? I have not seen the cock-sparrow for three months, and what is more, I do not want to see him; I can never forgive him for what he has done."

"He knows how you regard him, and that is the reason why he has not been to see you, and told you how he was situated."

"But what has happened? Has he been run over at crossing? He is fool enough for even that to befall him."

"No, Mr. Welsh; I will tell you all I know, and then you will think more kindly and judge more leniently of Mr. Saltren. The landlady spoke to Thomasine because she was uneasy about him, and she is a good-hearted creature. It seems that when Mrs. Saltren married, Mr. Saltren was left without any means whatever."

“He had plenty of money. He sold Chillacot.”

“He made over the whole proceeds to his mother. She has not left him a penny of it. From what I learn, she has given it to Captain Tubb to invest for her in a water-wheel and a pump.”

“Marianne is fool enough for anything—except to speak the truth. What next?”

“After she had departed as Mrs. Tubb, your nephew was left absolutely without resources. He did everything that lay in his power to obtain a situation, first in one capacity, then in another. He even—he even”—Arminell’s voice quivered—“he even offered himself as a shop assistant and was rejected. Disappointments, repeated day by day and week by week, told on his spirits and on his health. As he was without means, he frankly informed his hostess about his circumstances, and asked for leave to occupy an attic bedroom, promising to pay her directly he got employment. She did not like to turn him out, and I daresay she thought she would get her rent

in the end from Mrs. Tubb, so she consented. But he has been living for many weeks on nothing but bread and a little thin tea without milk. He has sold his books and everything he could part with, and is now reduced to dire distress. He goes out every day in the desperate endeavour to find work, but his superior education, and his gentlemanly feelings stand in his way. Now his health is failing, he looks too delicate for work, and no one will have him on that account. He does not complain. He goes on trying, but his daily disappointments have broken his spirit. It does seem a hopeless venture for a man of good education and exceptional abilities to find work in London."

"Sans interest," added Welsh. "Of old, interest was in the hands of the upper classes. Now it is in the hands of the lower."

"I heard a good deal of this from Thomasine," continued Arminell. "I could not bear it. I ran off to Bloomsbury to see Mrs. Bankes, and found her to be a very kind,

feeling, and willing woman. She told me everything—how underfed Mr. Saltren was, how thin and shabby his clothes had become, what a bad cough he had got, and how long it was since she had been paid for her lodging.”

“I made sure Mrs. Banks would not omit to mention that.”

“She is a most considerate woman. She said she had done him an egg of late, every morning, and charged him nothing for it, though eggs are at nine for a shilling, and he had had sixteen in all; so that she was, as she said, beside the cost of his lodging, nearly two shillings to the bad through these eggs—but she is a good honest soul, she told me he had worn out the soles of his boots and could not afford a new pair, and they let in the wet.” Arminell stopped, she was choking.

Presently she went on, “Whilst we were talking, he came in at the house door, and I heard him cough; and then he went upstairs, with his hand on the bannisters, dragging his tired feet and his springless weight up

the steep steps. He halted at each landing ; he was weary and his breath failed. I listened till he had reached the very top of the house, and gone into his little attic-room where he sleeps, and reads, and eats, and dreams over his disappointments."

She stopped. She had clasped her hands on her lap, and was twisting, plaiting, and pulling her fingers.

"Then you came away to tell me," said Mr. Welsh.

"No, I did not."

"What next?"

"My heart was full. I went out into the lobby and stood there, and I began to cry. And then, all at once, I ran upstairs."

"What—to his room?"

"Yes—I went after him, I could not help it. He was so utterly lonely and so unhappy. Mrs. Bankes said that no one ever came to see him, he had no friends. It is dreadful to think of being alone in London for months without any one to speak to, that is, any one who feels for you, and knows about persons and things and places you have loved. I

ran upstairs after him, and tapped at his door, and dashed right in on him."

The colour rose and fell on her cheek.

"I should have been happy for the occasion to have a talk with him, only the circumstances were so sad. My heart came into my throat when I saw him, and I held out my hand to him—no, in honour bright—I held out both hands to him. He was surprised. I sat down there and made him tell me everything. He did not complain, he was very brave, but he had lost hope, and he plodded on as in a treadmill, trying for work because it was a duty to seek it, not because he was sanguine of getting it. I do not know how long I was there; I insisted on having tea with him, and quite a nice little tea we had, and a chop—no, two chops with it. I ordered them, and I would have them, and, of course, Mrs. Bankes brought up Worcester sauce as well. Who ever knew a lodging-house without Worcester sauce? I am obstinate when I take an idea into my head. You know that. He was quite happy, I do believe, happier than he has been for

months, sitting there with me, taking tea, and milk in the tea, and talking about old times, and Orleigh—dear Orleigh!—and my brother Giles and papa.” Her heart was beating fast, so fast that it stopped her flow of words.

Mr. Welsh said nothing, nor did Mrs. Welsh, who looked at her husband questioningly, and then at Arminell.

“Once or twice I made him laugh, and the colour came again into his white face, and the brightness into his dull eyes. But when he laughed it brought on a fit of coughing.”

“Why did not the fellow come to me?” asked Welsh. “I have no patience with his pride—it was nothing but pride which kept him away.”

“Self-respect, perhaps, and resolve to make a way for himself if possible. You had discouraged him from attempting literature, and he had lost all faith in politics. Besides, he kept away from this house because I was in it, and he felt he had no right to come here whilst I lived with you.”

She began again to plait her fingers, and looked down at them with a little confusion in her face. Presently she looked at the miniature of the marine officer, Mrs. Welsh's father, and said, with a laugh, "Do you know, Mr. Welsh, that Mrs. Saltren imposed on the landlady, and made her believe that she was going to marry an Admiral of the Blue. When Mrs. Bankes found out the truth, Mrs. Saltren, I mean Mrs. Tubb, said she had heard men-of-war so constantly spoken of as tubs, and nothing but tubs, and as her husband was a Tubb, she considered she had a right to speak of him as a naval officer. It is a shame to tell the story, but—"

"It is too good not to be told. Marianne all over."

"And, Mr. Welsh, there was a doctor lodging on the first floor at Mrs. Bankes', and he happened to see your nephew on the stairs, and hear him cough, so he made him step into his room and he examined his chest."

"What did he say?"

"That there was constitutional delicacy,

and that unless he went for a couple of winters to the south of Europe, and after that wintered at Penzance, Torquay, or Bournemouth, he would be a dead man. But, if he took proper care of himself and lived well, drank cod-liver oil and old port, kept out of east winds and from getting wet, he might yet make old bones."

"That is out of the question," said Welsh; "he shall have De Jongh's cod-liver oil, and inhale carbolic acid, and wear Dr. Jaeger's all-wool—to go to the south of Europe is impracticable."

"Not at all."

"My dear Miss Inglett, not another word. I will do all I can for the rascal. But I cannot afford that."

"But I can."

"I won't allow it. I am very sorry for the boy, and will do my duty by him as his uncle; but I can't send him to the Riviera."

"But it is settled that he is going."

"How? When?"

"Directly, and with me."

"Nonsense, Miss Inglett."

‘ And I have a house at Bournemouth.’

“ That is true ; but——”

“ But I’m going to marry him, so as to be able to nurse him and carry him off to Bordighera, and give him De Jongh’s cod-liver oil myself.”

“ Miss Inglett, in reason ! ”

“ It is settled. I settled it. I have paid Mrs. Bankes for the eggs and all the rest. When we are off together we can talk at our leisure about Orleigh.”

CHAPTER LII.

ON DIPPERS.

SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS, in his treatise on the composition of a picture, lays down as a necessity that a patch of blue sky should be introduced into every painting, an opening through which the eye may escape out of the constraint and gloom of the canvas. If the subject be a dungeon, in one corner must be a window through which the eye can mount to heaven ; if a forest, there must be a gap in the foliage through which the sun may strike and the free air blow. If a landscape under a grey canopy, or a storm at sea under rolling clouds, there must be a rift somewhere through which the upper azure gleams ; otherwise the picture oppresses and the frame cramps. For this reason, the preceding chapter was entitled " A Patch of Blue Sky," for in that chapter a small opening was made quite in a corner, into that serene and super-

terrestrial, that ethereal and sublime realm—matrimony.

For a good many chapters our hero and heroine have been in a poor way, inhaling London smoke, without sunshine enlivening their existences. From Orleigh Park to Shepherd's Bush, and from the elastic atmosphere of the country to the fogs of the metropolis, is a change which, considering the altered conditions of both—Jingles without a situation, living on bread and thin tea, and Arminell without a home, living with third-rate people—was depressing to both, and the picture was overcharged with shadows. Therefore a little glimpse has been given into that heaven to which all youthful and inexperienced novel-readers aspire.

Sir Joshua Reynolds, moreover, insists on a proper balance of lights and shadows. He says that it is false art to accumulate dark spots on one side of the picture without relieving them with a corresponding number of luminous foci on the other. Now in this story the reader has been given three deaths.

Therefore, there must needs be the same number of marriages to produce equilibrium. Accordingly, over against the dark points of Archelaus Tubb, Lord Lamerton, and Captain Saltren, we set off the bright combinations of Samuel and Joan, of Captain Tubb and Marianne, and of Arminell and Jingles. These are not, it is true, spots of transcendent brilliancy, double stars of the first order, but of subdued and chastened effulgence. Not many roses crowned the hymeneal altar of Sam Ceely, nor would an impassioned epithalamium suit the nuptials of Mrs. Saltren, just recovered from a touch of paralysis. Nor will the beaker of ecstatic love brim over at the union of Arminell and Giles Saltren, seeing that it is largely filled with De Jongh's cod-liver oil. When a cook has over-salted the soup, he mixes white sugar with it, and this neutralises the brine and gives the soup a mellowness, and velvety softness to the palate. On the same principle, having put too many tears into this tale, I am shaking in the hymeneal sugar in just proportions.

I know very well I am letting the reader

into the secrets of construction, telling the tricks of the trade, but as this narrative is written for instruction as well as for amusement, I do not scruple thus to indicate one of the principles of the art of novel writing; and I do this with purpose, to gain the favour of the reader, who I fear is a little ruffled and resentful, because I do not give a full and particular account of the marriage. But it really hardly merited such an account, it was celebrated so quietly—without choral song and train of bride's-maids, and without peal of bells. I am so much afraid that by omitting to make a point of the marriage I may offend my readers that I have let them into one of the secrets of the construction of a plot.

Among poor people a bottle of lemon-drops is set on the table, and the children are given bread to eat. Those little ones whose conduct has been indifferent are allowed only bread and point for a meal, but those who have behaved well are permitted to enjoy bread and rub. To their imaginations some of the sweetness of the lollipops penetrates the glass and adheres to their slices.

A novel is the intellectual meal of a good many readers, and it begins with bread and point, and is expected to end with bread and rub at the acidulated drops of connubial felicity. Usually the reader has to consume a great deal of bread and point and is only allowed bread and rub in final chapters. In this story, however, I have been generous, I have allowed of three little frettings at the bottle instead—indeed, instead of keeping one tantalising bottle before the eyes of the reader, I have set three on the table in front of him.

That I have transgressed the rule which requires the marriage of hero and heroine to be at the end of the book, in the very last chapter, I freely admit ; but I have done this on purpose, and I have, for the same purpose, most slyly slipped in the marriage, or rather left it to the imagination, between the end of Chapter LI. and the beginning of Chapter LII. And what do you suppose is my reason ? It is, that I want to *dodge the dippers*. The dippers are those readers who are only by an euphemism called readers.

They stand by the course of a story, and pop a beak down into it every now and then, and bring up something from the current, and then fly away pretending that they have read the whole story. The dipper generally plunges the bill into the first chapter, then dips into the last of the three volumes, and then again once or twice in the mid-stream of the tale.

These dippers are gorgeous creatures, arrayed in gold and azure, with bejewelled necks and wings and crowns. But in one matter they differ from all other fowl—they have no gizzards. Other birds, notably those of the barn door, when they eat pass their food through a pair of internal grind-stones, and thoroughly digest and assimilate it. The dippers, being devoid of this organ, neither digest nor assimilate anything. They take nothing into them for the purpose of nutrition, but for the taste it leaves on their tongues. Consequently, the food they like best is not that which invigorates, but that which is high flavoured.

A dipper may seem very small game at

which to fire a shot, but the dippers are the special aversion of novel writers. These latter have laboured to please, perhaps to instruct; they have worked with their pens till their fingers are cramped, and their brains bemuzzed, and they see the fruit of conscientious toil treated as a bird treats a nectarine—pecked at and spoiled, not eaten.

But I have headed this chapter “On Dippers,” not because I intended to blaze at those little, frivolous, foolish birds who dip into my story and let all they scoop up dribble from their beaks again, but because I have another class of dippers in my eye, about whom I have still sharper words to say. And see!—one of this order has unexpectedly dropped in on the Welshes—and that is Mrs. Cribbage.

The Reverend Mrs. Cribbage was not one of the king-fishers, but was a dipper of the cormorant or skua genus. She was not one to stand by the stream of a story and dip in that, but in the sea of life, and seek in that for savoury meat over which to snap the bill, and smack the tongue, and turn up the eyes,

and distend the jaw-pouches. The dippers of this order congregate on a rock above the crystal tide and chatter with their beaks, whilst their eyes pierce the liquid depths. They have no perceptions of the beauty of colour in the water, no admiration for its limpidity. They inhale with relish none of the ozone that wafts over it—their eyes explore for blubber, for uprooted weed, for mollusks that have been bruised, for dead fish, for crustaceans that have lost limbs, for empty shells invaded by parasites, for the scum, and the waste, and the wreckage, in the mighty storm-tossed ocean of life.

Aristotle, in his “History of Animals,” says that most fish avoid what is putrescent; but the taste of the dippers is other than that of the fish. The dippers have no perception and liking for the freshness and fragrance of the sea, but have vastly keen noses for carrion. The suffering whiting, the crushed nautilus, the disabled shrimp, are pounced on with avidity, and the great penguin-pouch expands under the beak like a Gladstone bag

full of the most varied forms of misery, of sorrow and of nastiness.

The skua is a dipper akin to, but more active than the wary cormorant and the clumsy auk. It is a lively bird, and darts on nimble wing over the sea, and when it perceives a gluttoned dipper in flight, it dives under it, strikes it on the breast, and makes it disgorge ; whereupon it seizes the prey as it falls, for itself. There are skuas as well as cormorants about the coasts of the great social ocean, and there are birds with the voracity of the cormorant and the quickness and adroitness of the skua—of such was Mrs. Cribbage. It was part of her cleverness in getting the food she required to come with a whisk and blow at those who least expected her ; and such was her visit or swoop on the Welshes.

Unfortunately for her, James Welsh was at home when she swept in, and he was quite able to hold his own before her.

“ My dear,” said he to his wife, “ I think I hear the cook squealing. She is in an epileptic fit. You had better go down into

the kitchen and remain below as long as the fit lasts. Get the slavey to sit on her feet, and you hold her head. I will remain at the service of Mrs. Cribbage. I am sure she will excuse you. We have an epileptic cook, ma'am—not a bad cook when out of her fits.”

“I am Mrs. Cribbage,” said the visitor, “the wife of the Rector of Orleigh. We have not had the pleasure of meeting before, but I know your sister, Mrs. Tubb, very well; she is a parishioner and the wife of one of our Sunday-school teachers. Of course I know about you, Mr. Welsh, though you may not know me.”

“I have heard a good deal about you, ma'am.”

“Through whom?” asked the lady eagerly.

“Through my nephew.”

“I have come to break to you some sad news about your sister. Poor thing, she had a first seizure on the death of her first husband, and she had a second immediately after her return to Orleigh as a bride. It was kept quiet. I was not told of it, nor was my hus-

band sent for. Now a third has ensued which has bereft her of speech, and it is feared will end fatally. I have come to town for some purchases and on a visit to friends, and I thought it would be kind and wise if I came to see you and tell you what I knew."

"Very kind indeed, ma'am."

"I promised Captain Tubb that I would do so; he is not a great hand at letter writing, and I said that I could explain the circumstances so much better by word of mouth than he could with the pen. The case, I fear, is serious. She cannot speak."

"It must indeed be serious, if Marianne can't speak," observed Welsh dryly; "I'll run down to Orleigh to-morrow."

"How is your nephew? Mrs. Tubb hadn't heard of him for three or four months. I dare say anxiety about him has brought on the seizure."

"My late nephew?" Welsh heaved a sigh. "Poor fellow, he is gone. He always was delicate."

"Gone!—"

"Yes—to a warm place."

"It is not for us to judge," said Mrs. Cribbage, sternly.

"Well, perhaps not," answered Welsh ; "but between you and me, ma'am, for what else was he fit ?"

"I always considered that he gave himself airs, and I had an impression that he indulged in free-thinking. Still, he was not positively vicious. Nothing was proved against his morals."

"Others go to a warm place that shall be nameless, besides those who are positively vicious."

"Well," said Mrs. Cribbage, "that is true, sadly true. And now to change the topic—how is Miss Inglett? Is she still with you?"

"Miss Inglett?" Welsh's eyes twinkled. Heknew what the woman had come to his place for. It was not out of kindness to communicate to him his sister's condition. He felt the dig of the skua's beak in his chest.

"Oh yes, we know all about it. Marianne Tubb talked before she had the stroke and lost the power of speech. You must not suppose, Mr. Welsh, that we are taken in and

believe that the Honourable Arminell Inglett died as has been represented, through the shock caused by her father's fatal fall."

"Ah! I remember seeing something about it in the papers. She died, did she?"

"No, no, Mr. Welsh, that will not do. Your sister let the cat out of the bag. She said that Miss Inglett was lodging here with you; and very boastful Mr. Tubb was about it, and much talk did it occasion in Orleigh. Some people would not believe it, they said that Marianne Saltren had been a liar, and Marianne Tubb was no better. However, others say that there is something in it. So, as I am come to town, I thought I would just run here and inquire, and see Miss Inglett myself."

"We have had an Inglett here, certainly," answered Welsh composedly, "and very decent pastry she made. She had a light hand."

"I do not comprehend."

"Are you in want of a cook, a nursemaid, or parlour maid? She was a handy girl, and Mrs. Welsh would be happy to give her a good character—a true and honest one, no

reading between the lines, no disguising of defects. She did not drink, was not a lie-abed, and was clean in her work and person. I won't say whether she put her fingers into the sugar, because I don't know, and Mrs. Welsh keeps the preserves and candied fruit locked up in the side-board."

"I do not understand," said Mrs. Cribbage, gazing perplexedly at Mr. Welsh's imperturbable face.

"She was a sort of general hand with us," explained Welsh, "was that girl Inglett. We were sorry to lose her, but she thought to better herself, and we do not give high wages. We can't afford to pay more than twelve pounds, and no beer. But the maid has the tea-leaves and dripping. That is—she had; but now that we have a cook, the cook arrogates the dripping to herself. We bear the young woman no grudge for leaving us. It is the way with girls, they will always be on the move, and if they can better themselves by moving, why not? What wages do you pay, ma'am? And how about perquisites?"

“ You had a general servant named Inglett ? ”

“ Yes, and our present housemaid is named Budge. Our cook is Mrs. Winter. The last cook we had drank, and ran up a ladder. It took several policemen to get her down. The ladder was of extraordinary height. It stood in a builder’s yard. It was impossible for us to retain the woman after that. She had risen into notoriety. Then, for awhile, the girl Inglett cooked for us ; she was not brought up to it, had never passed through her apprenticeship as kitchen-maid, but some women take to cooking as poets take to verses—naturally.”

“ That is true,” said Mrs. Cribbage. Her mouth was gradually falling at the corners. She had expected to fish up a very queer and unpleasant bit of scandal, and, to her disappointment, began to see that she had spooned up clean water in her beak.

“ Mrs. Welsh, seeing her abilities, may have advised the girl Inglett to take a kitchen-maid’s place—I cannot say. Has she applied to you for such a situation in

your house, ma'am? If so, I am sure Mrs. Welsh can confidently recommend her."

"We thought," said Mrs. Cribbage, in a tone of discouragement, "that is to say, Mrs. Tubb said most positively that—that the Honourable Arminell Inglett, daughter of Lord Lamerton, was not dead, but was lodging with you. And you *really* had a servant of the name of Inglett?"

"Certainly, a general, as I said—and now you mention it, it does seem queer that she should have had such an aristocratic name, but I daresay she assumed it, as actresses do."

"I was led by Marianne Tubb to suppose—"

"Was not that like Marianne?" Mr. Welsh went into a fit of laughter. Mrs. Cribbage, with a ghastly smile, admitted that it was like Marianne Tubb, who was certainly given to boasting and romancing. However, she added, charitably—

"Really, it almost seems a judgment on her."

"What does?"

“The stroke. It was too bad of her to make us suppose that the Honourable Arminell Inglett had come to live in such a quarter as this. Then you really believe, Mr. Welsh, that Lord Lamerton’s daughter died of the shock, when she heard of her father’s premature death?”

“I saw it so stated in the papers, and they are generally well informed. What sort of a person was she? I ask you, as the Rector’s wife, was she worldly? Was she at all prepared for the great change?”

Mrs. Cribbage shook her head.

“I was afraid it was so,” said Welsh solemnly. “Then I should not be at all surprised if she also had gone to the same warm place as my poor nephew.”

“It is not for us to judge,” said Mrs. Cribbage gravely; “still, if it be permitted us to look beyond the veil, I would not say but that she had. She was barely civil to me, once she was positively rude. Yes—I have no doubt that she also has gone—gone—”

“To the same warm place,” added Welsh.

CHAPTER LIII.

ALLAH'S SLIPPER.

HAVING occupied an entire chapter with dippers, it may seem to the reader to be acting in excess of what is just to revert in the ensuing chapter to the same topic ; but if we mention dippers again, it is in another sense altogether.

In an oriental tale, a sultan was unable to conceive how that a thousand days could seem to pass as a minute, or a minute be expanded into a thousand days. Then a magician bade a pail of water be brought into the royal presence, and invited the sultan to plunge his head into it. He did so, and at once found himself translated to a strange country where he was destitute of means of life, and was forced to support existence by hard labour as a porter. He married a wife, and became the father of seven children, after which his wife died, and as he was oppressed

with old age and poverty, he plunged into a river to finish his woes, when—up came his head out of the pail of water. He stormed at the magician for having given him such a life of wretchedness. “But, sire,” said the magician, “your august head has been under water precisely three seconds.”

Now I do not mean to say that this story is applicable to my hero and heroine in all its parts. I do not mean that their history and that of the sultan fit, when one is applied to the other, as to the triangles $A B C$ and $D E F$ in the fourth proposition of the First Book of Euclid, but only that there is a resemblance. Both Giles Saltren and Arminell had, as the expression goes, got their heads under water, and having got them there, found themselves beginning a new career, in a fresh place of existence, with fresh experiences to make and connections to form. The past was to both cut away as if it had never been, and, unlike this sultan, there was no prospect of their getting their heads up again into their former life. They must, therefore, make the best they could of that new life in which they

found themselves; and, perhaps, Arminell acted sensibly in resolving that they should begin it together.

If Arminell had settled into her house at Bournemouth, and kept her pony-carriage, and appeared to be unstrained in circumstances, the residents of Bournemouth would, in all probability, have asked who this Miss Inglett was, and have turned up the name in the Red Books, and pushed enquiries which could with difficulty have been evaded; but when she set up her establishment as Mrs. Saltren the case was altered; for the patronymic does not occur in the "Peerage" or in "Burke's Landed Gentry." It was a name to baffle enquiry, whereas Inglett was calculated to provoke it. It is true that Arminell might have changed her maiden name without altering her condition, but this she was reluctant to do.

In Gervase of Tilbury's "*Otia Imperialia*" is an account of a remarkable event that took place in England in the reign of Henry II. One day an anchor descended out of the clouds and grappled the earth, immediately

followed by a man who swarmed down the cable and disengaged the anchor, whereupon man and anchor were drawn up again into the clouds.

Similar events occur at the present day. People, not men alone, but women, whole families, come down on us out of the clouds, and move about on the earth in our midst.

We know neither whence they come, nor anything about their antecedents. They talk and eat and drink like the rest of us, and are sometimes very agreeable to converse with, and take infinite pains to make themselves popular. Nevertheless, we regard them with suspicion. We are never sure that they will be with us long. Some day they will release the anchor and go up with a whisk above the clouds into the fog-land whence they fell.

There are certain times of the year when meteoric stones descend, and there are certain belts on the surface of the earth on which they chiefly tumble. So is it with these people who come down on us out of the clouds. They usually fall into watering-places, and winter-quarters, and always drop

down in the season at these resorts. Rarely do they descend into quiet country towns or rural districts among the autochthones, parsonic and squirarchical. We come on them abroad, we become acquaintances, we sit together at the opera, organize picnics together, take coffee at one table in the gardens where the band plays, yet we never know whence they have come and whither they will go. When we are at the sea-side with our family we meet with another family, the father and mother respectable, the young men handsome and polite, the girls æsthetic, and with—oh, such eyes! The young people soon strike up an intimacy, go boating, shrimping, nutting together; but we, the parents, have seen the intimacy thicken with some uneasiness, and do not like to see our son hang about the handsomest of the girls, or the most irreproachable of the young men so assiduous in his attentions to our daughter. Then we begin to institute enquiries, but learn nothing. Nobody ever heard of these people before. Nobody ever saw them before. Nobody knows where they made

their money—yet money they must have, for the girls dress charmingly, and you cannot dress charmingly by the sea-side for nothing.

Then, all at once, when these people become aware that you are pushing enquiries, the blade of the anchor wriggles out of the sand, and up they all go, the young men waving their straw hats, and the girls casting sad glances out of their splendid eyes, and the old people silent about prosecuting the acquaintance elsewhere.

But—it must be admitted that these people who come down out of the clouds do not for the most part form as complete a family as that just spoken of. Either the monsieur or the madame is deficient, and we never know exactly where he or she is, whether above the clouds or under the earth.

No doubt that at Bournemouth, as at other sea-side places, persons appear at the beginning of the season, cast anchor for a while, and no one troubles himself about their antecedents, because they are supposed to be there for the season only ; but were a young lady to anchor herself firmly, to buy a house

and become a permanent resident, especially if she were pretty and rich, do you suppose that the Bournemouth residents would not examine the cable of her anchor, to see if the government thread be woven into it, and the anchor to discover the maker's stamp? Do you not suppose that they would set their telescopes and opera-glasses to work to discover out of what star the rope descended?

Arminell knew this. She brought with her out of her old world that caution which bade her inquire who a person was before she consulted with that person; and she was quite sure that wherever she set up her tent, there questions would be asked concerning her. She knew that there were Mrs. Cribbages everywhere, and that she would have to be on her guard against them. But her difficulties about keeping her secret were materially diminished by marriage.

The ceremony took place quietly, and no announcement of it was made in the *Times*, the *Queen*, and the country papers. Immediately after it, she and Giles departed for Algiers. That was the warm place of which

Mr. Welsh had spoken to Mrs. Cribbage. They went to Algiers, instead of Bordighera and Mentone, because Saltren had been to the Riviera before, and might be recognised.

Arminell had constituted herself the nurse of Jingles. She was the nurse not only of a sick body, but of an infirm soul. His morbid sensitiveness was in part constitutional, and due to his delicacy, but it had been fostered and been ripened by the falseness of the position in which he had been placed. Arminell had recovered her elasticity sooner than had he; but then she had not been reduced to the same distress. Both had been humbled, but the humiliations he had undergone had been more numerous, more persistent than hers. She, at her moral rebound, had adapted herself to her situation and had done well in every capacity; he had not been able to find any situation in which he could show his powers.

The body reacts on the moral nature more than we suppose, or allow for in others. We call those ill-tempered who are in fact disordered in liver and not in heart, and we

consider those to be peppery who in reality are only irritable because they have gout flying about their joints. The morbidness of Jingles was largely due to his delicacy of lung, and with De Jongh's cod-liver oil would probably in time disappear.

When a man battles a way for himself into a position not his by right of birth, he acquires a tough skin. Siegfried, the Dragon-slayer, goes by the name of the Horny Siegfried because, by bathing in the dragon's blood, he toughened his hide—only between his shoulders, where a linden-leaf fell whilst he was bathing, could he be made to feel.

The successful men who have fought dragons and captured their guarded treasures are thick-skinned, impervious to hints, ridicule, remonstrances—you cannot pinch them, scratch them, prick them, unless you discover the one vulnerable point. But Saltren had fought no dragons, only his own shadow, and his skin was as thin as the inner film of an egg—highly sensitive, and puckering at a breath. His vanity had been broken away, but his skin had not been rendered more callous

thereby. Formerly he was in perpetual dudgeon because he imagined slights that were never offered. He still imagined slights, but instead of becoming angry at them became depressed.

As his health improved in the dry, salubrious air of North Africa, he began to interest himself in the antiquities, to explore ruins, to copy inscriptions, and so forgot himself in archæological pursuits. Arminell encouraged him to prosecute these subjects, and he became more enthusiastic on them ; he regretted that the increasing heat would send him to Europe. However, on his arrival at Bournemouth, he found occupation in arranging his library and setting out his antiquities. Then he wrote an account of some explorations he had among the megalithic monuments near Constantine for a scientific journal, and this attracted attention, and led to correspondence, and to the article being reprinted with additions, and to a dispute as to the resemblances and dissimilarities between the Constantine monuments and the so-called Druidical remains in Britain.

The following winter Saltren was again at Algiers, and resumed his explorations with assiduity, spent much time in planning, sketching, digging, and formed a theory of his own relative to megalithic monuments contrary to that of Mr. Fergusson, whom he resolved to attack and crush. When summer came, at his particular desire, Arminell and he visited Denmark and Norway, where he examined such stone monuments as belonged to a prehistoric period, and then went with her into Brittany.

As he became known as an antiquary, his society was sought by men of like tastes, and so he came to have a little circle of acquaintances, which tended to widen, and as those who came to know him through prehistoric rude stone monuments fell in love with his charming young wife, they insisted on their womankind calling and knowing her also. In vain did the ladies ask, "But, who was she?" They were crushed with the reply, "My dears, what does it matter what she *was*, she *is* the wife of one of our first authorities on comparative megalithology."

So by degrees, the young couple formed a coterie about themselves, and were no longer solitary and feeling as if they were outcasts.

Now and then Mr. Welsh ran down to Bournemouth and spent a day with them, and sometimes Mrs. Welsh brought the baby ; but the Welshes were no assistance to them in social matters. The Welsh circle was of a different style of mind and manner and interest from that which formed round the Saltrens. It was not a circle which could wax excited over anything prehistoric, it was so completely engrossed in the present.

But the Welshes were always received with the utmost warmth and kindness by Arminell, who could not forget what she owed them, and harboured for the Radical journalist an affection quite special, mixed with great respect. She knew the thorough goodness of the man, and she delighted in his smartness.

“ Look here, Tryphœna,” said James Welsh one day to his wife ; “ do you remember what I said to you about aristocrats and their trains ? There is something else I will

tell you. Once upon a time, say the Mussulmans, Allah, sitting on his throne in paradise, dropped the slipper off his foot, and it fell down into hell. Then he called to Adam, and bade him go and fetch it. 'What!' exclaimed Adam, 'shall I, who am made in the likeness of God, descend to the place of devils? God forbid!' Then Allah ordered Abraham to go after his slipper. 'Shall I go down into hell? I who am the friend of God! Far be it from me!' was his reply. Then Allah turned to Moses, and he exclaimed, 'What! shall I, who am the law-giver of God, I who led the people out of the brick-kilns, shall I descend to the furnace? Away with the thought!' And David cried, when Allah turned to him, 'Nay, but I am the psalmist of God, press me not to go where demons yell discords.' And Isaiah had also an objection to go, for he said, 'I am the prophet of God.' Then Allah turned to Mahomet, and said, 'Wilt thou go after my slipper?' And Mahomet answered, 'I go at once, I am the servant of God.' Whereupon Allah exclaimed, 'Thou only art worthy

to sit on my throne. All the rest are a parcel of cads'—or words to that effect."

"But, James, what has this to do with the aristocracy?"

"Be silent, Tryphœna, and listen. You and I and all those who have clambered up the steps of the social heaven, are mightily tenacious of our places, and resent the slightest suggestion made to us to step below. We clutch at our seats, and insist on every prerogative and privilege that attaches to it. Quite right that it should be so. We value the place we have gained, because it has cost us so much effort to attain it, and because we have to balance ourselves and cling so tight to keep ourselves from sliding down. But it is different with those who have been born and brought up on the footstool of the throne. They don't want a pat of cobblers'-wax to keep them firm on their seat, and they are not scrupulous about descending after Allah's shoe wherever it may have fallen. If they go down to hell they don't get smoked. They don't find anyone disputing their seats when they return. They

can go and come, and we must sit and cling. That makes a difference. There is something of Allah everywhere, only it wants fetching up. Just see what has been made of that girl, Thomasine Kite. If ever there was a wilful, unruly creature, fated to go to the devil, it was she. And what could you do with her? Nothing. You sat on a step just above her, and were not able to stoop for fear of toppling over. She is not the same girl now, and I hear she is going to be married to a sergeant of the coastguard. She is a well-conducted woman, passionately attached to her mistress, and no wonder,—Arminell has brought up Allah's slipper out of her. Look again at Jingles! I never had any opinion of him—a conceited, morbid monkey—and I could have done nothing with him; I lack the tact or whatever it is that is needful. But he is changed also, unobtrusive, self-respecting, learned, and modest—she has brought up Allah's slipper out of him.”

“You are a weather-cock, James. At one time you were all against the aristocracy, and

now no one can do anything right unless he has blue blood in him. And yet—you call yourself a Radical.”

“So I am—a Radical still,” said Welsh. “I have not altered my opinions, but my mode of procedure. I do not want to pull the aristocracy down, but to pull all society up to it. I don’t say that no one can fetch up Allah’s slipper but a born gentleman, but I do say that no one who has not attained to the aristocratic ease in a superior position, is likely to descend to seek Allah’s slipper, wherever it is to be found. I may have been wrong in thinking the best way of advancing society was by pinching the calves of those who sat above me, so as to make their seat intolerable, instead of lending a hand to help up those below to a share of my stool. Do you understand me, old woman?”

“I do not think I do. You have such a figurative method of speaking, James.”

CHAPTER LIV.

MEGALITHIC.

ONE bright summer day, when the sea was still and blue as the nemophyla, and twinkling as if strewn with diamond dust, Arminnell was in her garden, with an apron on, gloves over her hands, a basket on her arm, and scissors for flowers.

At the end of the garden, partly screened by rhododendrons, was a summer-house, and outside it some lumps of plaster of Paris, pots of oil-paint, and slabs of slate, smeared with mortar. Occasionally the door of the pavilion opened, and a man issued from it wearing a brown-holland blouse, and on his head a paper cap. Particles and splashes of plaster marked his face, especially about the nose, where he had rubbed with a white finger.

“I will have it all cleaned away, Giles,”

said Arminell. "How are you getting on with the models?"

"Very well, only the plaster does not set as fast as I could wish. When I have got the dolmens of Gozo and Constantine, of Lock Mariaker and Madron to scale, side by side, the most prejudiced persons must agree that the similarity of construction is strong evidence of identity of origin. I can show on my map of megalithic monuments where the stream of dolmen builders travelled, how that it set from Asia, along the margin of the Baltic, and then branched north over Britain, and south over Gaul. I can prove conclusively that they were not Gauls and Kelts. Just come and look at my cromlechs and dolmens in the rough. The resemblance *saute aux yeux*. We must establish their geographical distribution, and then compare their points of similarity and dis——."

"Please, ma'am, a lady and a young gentleman are in the drawing-room, and want to see you."

"What names?"

"They gave none, ma'am."

Arminell removed her apron, took off her gloves, and handed them and the basket to the maid, then went towards the drawing-room glass door opening upon the garden.

“Some people come to collect for the Jubilee,” said Arminell aside to her husband, as she passed.

“I heard they were about.”

In another moment, however, Saltren, who was engaged on his models of prehistoric rude stone monuments, heard a cry, and returning to the door of his laboratory, saw Arminell in the arms of an old lady, and at the same moment recognised her, and also the boy at her side. Then, without removing his blouse or his paper cap, he ran also across the garden, to welcome Lady Lamer-ton and his old pupil, Giles.

I do not think I could better illustrate the fact of the transformation that had been effected in Jingles, than by mentioning this incident. Can you—I cannot—conceive of Mr. Jingles as tutor at Orleigh Park, allowing himself to be seen smudged with plaster, in a paper cap, with a nose of chalky white-

ness? On the present occasion he was so excited, so pleased to see dear Lady Lamerton and Giles again, that he forgot all about his own personal appearance, and even about the quoit of the Madron cromlech he was then modelling to scale.

Lady Lamerton had come to see Arminell, as Arminell could not visit her; and this was her first visit. She had not ventured before, because she did not think it prudent, not because her heart did not draw her to Arminell.

The most contradictory reports had circulated relative to the girl. Some had asserted that she was dead, others declared she was alive. Then it was said she was lodging in London, under an assumed name, and had made herself notorious by her advocacy of woman's rights, divided skirts, and social democracy. It was asserted that she had become a platform orator and a writer under the direction of that revolutionist, James Welsh. This was again denied, and said to rest on a mistake arising from James Welsh having had a general servant named Inglett. After a twelvemonth gossip ceased, for interest was

no longer taken in a person who was no more seen, and who probably was dead.

And what does it matter, argued the cynical, whether she be dead or alive, as she is no more in society? We know nothing of those who do not appear, who have not been presented, who are not danced before our eyes.

In mediæval times there were *oubliettes* in all castles, and inconvenient persons were let fall down them to disappear for ever. Did they break their necks in falling? Or did they linger on, fed on bread and water, and languish for years? What did it matter? They were practically dead when the trap-door closed over their heads.

Every aristocratic, every gentle family has now what was anciently the prerogative of the mightiest barons only. Every family is encumbered with its awkward and troublesome members who must be dropped somewhere.

The Honourable Arminell Inglett had gone down an *oubliette*, but whether it were the family vault or a social limbo mattered nothing. We are too wise to ask about her.

We never do anything inconsistent with good taste. We let sleeping dogs lie, and don't push inquiries about dropped relatives.

When we are invited to dine at my lord's, we do not peep to see if the broken meats and half-finished bottles be tumbled down under the feet to be mumbled and drained by the forgotten ones beneath. When we dance at my lady's Christmas ball, in the state ball-room, we know very well that below it is the family *oubliette*, but we scuffle with our feet to drown the moans of those *mauvais sujets* who lie below, and the orchestra sounds its loudest strain to disguise the rattle of their chains.

"My dear husband," said Arminell, "take Lamerton to see your models. They will interest him, and I will go in with mamma. Besides, you can clear his mind of delusions with respect to the Druids, which is really important. You know that there is a circle of stones on Orleigh Common, and in an unguarded moment the boy might attribute them to the ancient Britons."

“The matter is not one to joke upon,” said Jingles with a flicker of annoyance in his face.

Then he retreated to the pavilion with his old pupil, to show him the work on which he was engaged.

Arminell, quick in perception, saw that Lady Lamerton had noticed the transient cloud, so she said, with a smile, “Do you remember my husband when he was Giles’s tutor? I mean, do you remember how sensitive he then was, how he winced when you came near him? I have heard of nervous disorders that make men thus susceptible. If you put a finger on them, they scream and writhe; if near them, they quiver with apprehension. He was in like manner touchy. Now, however, he is quite recovered. There is but one single point on which he is sensitive, and where a feather will make him wince.”

“What is that?”

“Megalithic monuments.”

“Megalithic monuments, my dear?”

“Yes, mamma. He loves me dearly, but even I, who can do almost anything with him,

would shrink from holding Mr. Fergusson's view that Stonehenge was a work of the Anglo-Saxons. If it did not separate us, it would make a temporary estrangement. But, understand me, we are the greatest of friends, we never quarrel. I believe with all my soul that the rude stone monuments are prehistoric and pre-Keltic."

"And what are his political views?"

"I do not think he has any. But he is deeply interested in the bill for the acquisition and nationalisation of the antiquities of the country. He says, and I agree with him, that if Britain is to maintain her place as a leading nation in the civilized world, she should conserve most strictly every prehistoric monument on the soil."

Then Arminell made Lady Lamerton rest on the sofa; and she drew a stool to her feet, and sat there holding her hands.

"I dare say you cannot understand why I married him," she said, after a short period of silence and mutual endearments. "But I was much alone, and oh! so solitary. I wanted a companion and did not relish the idea of an

elderly eligible female, who, with bland perpetual smile, acquiescence in all my vagaries, non-resistance to my opinion, would have been intolerable to me. I could not do without a companion, and I could not endure the society of one. It is the vocation of these companions to be complaisant, to have no view, no opinion, no personality. Unless she were all that, she would be no companion ; if she were all that, she would be insupportable to me. Then—with her I could not have talked about dear Orleigh.”

She stroked and then kissed her step-mother's hand.

“ Also poor Jingles—I mean Mr. Saltren—required a companion, a nurse ; some one to look after him day and night, and see that he changed his socks when they were damp, and drank fresh milk warm from the cow, and took tonics at regular hours, and had sweet-oil rubbed into his back between the shoulder-blades. I could not ask Mrs. Bankes to do that, or the housemaid, and there was really no one else who could be asked. I could not do this unless I married him, and so—I be-

came his wife, and rubbed in the sweet-oil. Thank God, he is a strong man now ; but he has to be kept up to the mark. I go with him when he makes archæological excursions to the Morbihan, or to Scotland to plan old stones, for when he gets interested he forgets himself, and would work on in an east wind or in a sou'-west drizz'le unless I were by to insist on his postponing the measurements till the weather mends. He is a dear, amiable fellow, and yields with the best grace. It is real pleasure to have to do with him. Now tell me something about Orleigh."

"About the people?"

"O yes, mamma, about the dear people there."

"You know that Sam Ceely is married to Joan Melhuish, and she is devoted to that old impostor as you seem to be to your patient. They live now in the cottage which was occupied by Captain Tubb till he moved to the old quarry."

"Where is Patience Kite?"

"She has been had up twice before the magistrates for obtaining money under false

pretences. She is an inveterate witch, and might well have been left alone, but Mrs. Cribbage has taken a dislike to her, and set the police upon her, and has had her summonsed. Just now she is in prison, because she could not pay the fine imposed on her. How is her daughter, Thomasine ? ”

“ Thomasine !—I will ring and you shall see her.”

“ Not just yet, Arminell.”

“ No, presently. She is the belle of Bournemouth. Such a handsome girl, blooms into greater beauty than ever, and is so good and affectionate and steady. She is going to be married to a coast-guard man, a most respectable fellow.”

“ And now about yourself, Armie. Does time not hang heavy on your hands ? You cannot be always engaged in prehistoric antiquities.”

“ Indeed, mamma,” answered Arminell with energy, “ time does not hang heavy on my hands. I have, of course, my dear husband to consider first of all, but I have plenty to occupy me besides—duties thor-

oughly humdrum. I visit the old women, I read to the sick, I am an active patroness of the Girls' Friendly Society, and I teach every Sunday in the school."

"You do! Why, Armie, you used to hate Sunday School."

"Dear mamma, I wish you could hear my class of girls, they have just acquired the list of apocryphal books which are not to be applied to establish doctrine. And, till I find some positive truth to teach, I content myself with making them repeat the names of all the homilies which no one has read, and which never are likely to be read. They have also been taught the meaning of Quinquagesima, Sexagesima, and Septuagesima."

"And you think you are really doing good, Armie?"

"I am using all my energies to teach my girls to grow up humdrum women."

THE END.

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